

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

HARTRIGHT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

X.

NOT a word more was said, on either side, as we walked back to the house. Miss Halcombe hastened immediately to her sister's room; and I withdrew to my studio to set in order all of Mr. Fairlie's drawings that I had not yet mounted and restored before I resigned them to the care of other hands. Thoughts that I had hitherto restrained, thoughts that made my position harder than ever to endure, crowded on me now that I was alone.

She was engaged to be married; and her future husband was Sir Percival Glyde. A man of the rank of baronet, and the owner of property in Hampshire.

There were hundreds of baronets in England, and dozens of landowners in Hampshire. Judging by the ordinary rules of evidence, I had not the shadow of a reason, thus far, for connecting Sir Percival Glyde with the suspicious words of inquiry that had been spoken to me by the woman in white. And yet, I did connect him with them. Was it because he had now become associated in my mind with Miss Fairlie; Miss Fairlie being in her turn, associated with Anne Catherick, since the night when I had discovered the ominous likeness between them? Had the events of the morning so unnerved me already that I was at the mercy of any delusion which common chances and common coincidences might suggest to my imagination? Impossible to say. I could only feel that what had passed between Miss Halcombe and myself, on our way from the summer-house, had affected me very strangely. The foreboding of some undiscoverable danger lying hid from us all in the darkness of the future, was strong on me. The doubt whether I was not linked already to a chain of events which even my approaching departure from Cumberland would be powerless to snap asunder—the doubt whether we any of us saw the end as the end would really be—gathered more and more darkly over my mind. Poignant as it was, the sense of suffering caused by the miserable end of my brief, presumptuous love, seemed to be blunted and deadened by the still stronger sense of something obscurely impending, something invisibly threatening, that Time was holding over our heads.

I had been engaged with the drawings little more than half an hour, when there was a knock at the door. It opened, on my answering; and, to my surprise, Miss Halcombe entered the room.

Her manner was angry and agitated. She caught up a chair for herself, before I could give her one; and sat down in it, close at my side.

"Mr. Hartright," she said, "I had hoped that all painful subjects of conversation were exhausted between us, for to-day at least. But it is not to be so. There is some underhand villany at work to frighten my sister about her approaching marriage. You saw me send the gardener on to the house, with a letter addressed, in a strange handwriting, to Miss Fairlie?"

"Certainly."

"That letter is an anonymous letter—a vile attempt to injure Sir Percival Glyde in my sister's estimation. It has so agitated and alarmed her that I have had the greatest possible difficulty in composing her spirits sufficiently to allow me to leave her room and come here. I know this is a family matter on which I ought not to consult you, and in which you can feel no concern or interest—"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Halcombe. I feel the strongest possible concern and interest in anything that affects Miss Fairlie's happiness or yours."

"I am glad to hear you say so. You are the only person in the house, or out of it, who can advise me. Mr. Fairlie, in his state of health and with his horror of difficulties and mysteries of all kinds, is not to be thought of. The clergyman is a good, weak man, who knows nothing out of the routine of his duties; and our neighbours are just the sort of comfortable, jog-trot acquaintances whom one cannot disturb in times of trouble and danger. What I want to know is this: ought I, at once, to take such steps as I can to discover the writer of the letter? or ought I to wait, and apply to Mr. Fairlie's legal adviser to-morrow? It is a question—perhaps a very important one—of gaining or losing a day. Tell me what you think, Mr. Hartright. If necessity had not already obliged me to take you into my confidence under very delicate circumstances, even my helpless situation would, perhaps, be no excuse for me. But, as things are, I cannot surely be wrong, after

all that has passed between us, in forgetting that you are a friend of only three months' standing."

She gave me the letter. It began abruptly, without any preliminary form of address, as follows :

"Do you believe in dreams? I hope, for your own sake, that you do. See what Scripture says about dreams and their fulfilment (Genesis xl. 8, xli. 25; Daniel iv. 18-25); and take the warning I send you before it is too late.

"Last night, I dreamed about you, Miss Fairlie. I dreamed that I was standing inside the communion rails of a church: I on one side of the altar-table, and the clergyman, with his surplice and his prayer-book, on the other.

"After a time, there walked towards us, down the aisle of the church, a man and a woman, coming to be married. You were the woman. You looked so pretty and innocent in your beautiful white silk dress, and your long white lace veil, that my heart felt for you and the tears came into my eyes.

"They were tears of pity, young lady, that Heaven blesses; and, instead of falling from my eyes like the every-day tears that we all of us shed, they turned into two rays of light which slanted nearer and nearer to the man standing at the altar with you, till they touched his breast. The two rays sprang in arches like two rainbows, between me and him. I looked along them; and I saw down into his inmost heart.

"The outside of the man you were marrying was fair enough to see. He was neither tall, nor short—he was a little below the middle size. A light, active, high-spirited man—about five-and-forty years old, to look at. He had a pale face, and was bald over the forehead, but had dark hair on the rest of his head. His beard was shaven on his chin, but was let to grow, of a fine rich brown, on his cheeks and his upper lip. His eyes were brown too, and very bright; his nose straight and handsome and delicate enough to have done for a woman's. His hands the same. He was troubled from time to time with a dry hacking cough; and when he put up his white right hand to his mouth, he showed the red scar of an old wound across the back of it. Have I dreamt of the right man? You know best, Miss Fairlie; and you can say if I was deceived or not. Read, next, what I saw beneath the outside—I entreat you, read, and profit.

"I looked along the two rays of light; and I saw down into his inmost heart. It was black as night; and on it was written, in the red flaming letters which are the handwriting of the fallen angel: 'Without pity and without remorse. He has strewn with misery the paths of others, and he will live to strew with misery the path of this woman by his side.' I read that; and then the rays of light shifted and pointed over his shoulder; and there, behind him, stood a fiend, laughing. And the rays of light shifted once more, and pointed over your shoulder; and there, behind you, stood an angel weeping. And

the rays of light shifted for the third time, and pointed straight between you and that man. They widened and widened, thrusting you both asunder, one from the other. And the clergyman looked for the marriage-service in vain: it was gone out of the book, and he shut up the leaves, and put it from him in despair. And I woke with my eyes full of tears and my heart beating—for I believe in dreams.

"Believe, too, Miss Fairlie—I beg of you, for your own sake, believe as I do. Joseph and Daniel, and others in Scripture, believed in dreams. Inquire into the past life of that man with the scar on his hand, before you say the words that make you his miserable wife. I don't give you this warning on my account, but on yours. I have an interest in your well-being that will live as long as I draw breath. Your mother's daughter has a tender place in my heart—for your mother was my first, my best, my only friend."

There, the extraordinary letter ended, without signature of any sort.

The handwriting afforded no prospect of a clue. It was traced on ruled lines, in the cramped, conventional, copybook character, technically termed "small hand." It was feeble and faint, and defaced by blots, but had otherwise nothing to distinguish it.

"That is not an illiterate letter," said Miss Halcombe, "and, at the same time, it is surely too incoherent to be the letter of an educated person in the higher ranks of life. The reference to the bridal dress and veil, and other little expressions, seem to point to it as the production of a woman. What do you think, Mr. Hartright?"

"I think so too. It seems to me to be not only the letter of a woman, but of a woman whose mind must be——"

"Deranged?" suggested Miss Halcombe. "It struck me in that light, too."

I did not answer. While I was speaking, my eyes rested on the last sentence of the letter: "Your mother's daughter has a tender place in my heart—for your mother was my first, my best, my only friend." Those words and the doubt which had just escaped me as to the sanity of the writer of the letter, acting together on my mind, suggested an idea, which I was literally afraid to express openly, or even to encourage secretly. I began to doubt whether my own faculties were not in danger of losing their balance. It seemed almost like a monomania to be tracing back everything strange that happened, everything unexpected that was said, always to the same hidden source and the same sinister influence. I resolved, this time, in defence of my own courage and my own sense, to come to no decision that plain fact did not warrant, and to turn my back resolutely on everything that tempted me in the shape of surmise.

"If we have any chance of tracing the person who has written this," I said, returning the letter to Miss Halcombe, "there can be no harm

in seizing our opportunity the moment it offers. I think we ought to speak to the gardener again about the elderly woman who gave him the letter, and then to continue our inquiries in the village. But first let me ask a question. You mentioned just now the alternative of consulting Mr. Fairlie's legal adviser to-morrow. Is there no possibility of communicating with him earlier? Why not to-day?"

"I can only explain," replied Miss Halcombe, "by entering into certain particulars, connected with my sister's marriage engagement, which I did not think it necessary or desirable to mention to you this morning. One of Sir Percival Glyde's objects in coming here, on Monday, is to fix the period of his marriage, which has hitherto been left quite unsettled. He is anxious that the event should take place before the end of the year."

"Does Miss Fairlie know of that wish?" I asked, eagerly.

"She has no suspicion of it; and, after what has happened, I shall not take the responsibility upon myself of enlightening her. Sir Percival has only mentioned his views to Mr. Fairlie, who has told me himself that he is ready and anxious, as Laura's guardian, to forward them. He has written to London, to the family solicitor, Mr. Gilmore. Mr. Gilmore happens to be away in Glasgow on business; and he has replied by proposing to stop at Linmeridge House, on his way back to town. He will arrive to-morrow, and will stay with us a few days, so as to allow Sir Percival time to plead his own cause. If he succeeds, Mr. Gilmore will then return to London, taking with him his instructions for my sister's marriage-settlement. You understand now, Mr. Hartright, why I speak of waiting to take legal advice until to-morrow? Mr. Gilmore is the old and tried friend of two generations of Fairlies; and we can trust him, as we could trust no one else."

The marriage-settlement! The mere hearing of those two words stung me with a jealous despair that was poison to my higher and better instincts. I began to think—it is hard to confess this, but I must suppress nothing from beginning to end of the terrible story that I now stand committed to reveal—I began to think, with a hateful eagerness of hope, of the vague charges against Sir Percival Glyde which the anonymous letter contained. What if those wild accusations rested on a foundation of truth? What if their truth could be proved before the fatal words of consent were spoken, and the marriage-settlement was drawn? I have tried to think, since, that the feeling which then animated me began and ended in pure devotion to Miss Fairlie's interests. But I have never succeeded in deceiving myself into believing it; and I must not now attempt to deceive others. The feeling began and ended in reckless, vindictive, hopeless hatred of the man who was to marry her.

"If we are to find out anything," I said, speaking under the new influence which was now directing me, "we had better not let another minute slip by us unemployed. I can only

suggest, once more, the propriety of questioning the gardener a second time, and of inquiring in the village immediately afterwards."

"I think I may be of help to you in both cases," said Miss Halcombe, rising. "Let us go, Mr. Hartright, at once, and do the best we can together."

I had the door in my hand to open it for her—but I stopped, on a sudden, to ask an important question before we set forth.

"One of the paragraphs of the anonymous letter," I said, "contains some sentences of minute personal description. Sir Percival Glyde's name is not mentioned, I know—but does that description at all resemble him?"

"Accurately; even in stating his age to be forty-five—"

Forty-five; and she was not yet twenty-one! Men of his age married wives of her age every day; and experience had shown those marriages to be often the happiest ones. I knew that—and yet even the mention of his age, when I contrasted it with hers, added to my blind hatred and distrust of him.

"Accurately," Miss Halcombe continued, "even to the scar on his right hand, which is the scar of a wound that he received years since when he was travelling in Italy. There can be no doubt that every peculiarity of his personal appearance is thoroughly well known to the writer of the letter."

"Even a cough that he is troubled with is mentioned, if I remember right?"

"Yes, and mentioned correctly. He treats it lightly himself, though it sometimes makes his friends anxious about him."

"I suppose no whispers have ever been heard against his character?"

"Mr. Hartright! I hope you are not unjust enough to let that infamous letter influence you?"

I felt the blood rush into my cheeks, for I knew that it *had* influenced me.

"I hope not," I answered, confusedly. "Perhaps I had no right to ask the question."

"I am not sorry you asked it," she said, "for it enables me to do justice to Sir Percival's reputation. Not a whisper, Mr. Hartright, has ever reached me, or my family, against him. He has fought successfully two contested elections; and has come out of the ordeal unscathed. A man who can do that, in England, is a man whose character is established."

I opened the door for her in silence, and followed her out. She had not convinced me. If the recording angel had come down from heaven to confirm her, and had opened his book to my mortal eyes, the recording angel would not have convinced me.

We found the gardener at work as usual. No amount of questioning could extract a single answer of any importance from the lad's impenetrable stupidity. The woman who had given him the letter was an elderly woman; she had not spoken a word to him; and she had gone away towards the south in a great hurry. That was all the gardener could tell us.

The village lay southward of the house. So to the village we went next.

XI.

Our inquiries at Limmeridge were patiently pursued in all directions, and among all sorts and conditions of people. But nothing came of them. Three of the villagers did certainly assure us that they had seen the woman; but as they were quite unable to describe her, and quite incapable of agreeing about the exact direction in which she was proceeding when they last saw her, these three bright exceptions to the general rule of total ignorance afforded no more real assistance to us than the mass of their unhelpful and unobservant neighbours.

The course of our useless investigations brought us, in time, to the end of the village, at which the schools established by Mrs. Fairlie were situated. As we passed the side of the building appropriated to the use of the boys, I suggested the propriety of making a last inquiry of the schoolmaster, whom we might presume to be, in virtue of his office, the most intelligent man in the place.

"I am afraid the schoolmaster must have been occupied with his scholars," said Miss Halcombe; "just at the time when the woman passed through the village, and returned again. However, we can but try."

We entered the playground enclosure, and walked by the schoolroom window, to get round to the door, which was situated at the back of the building. I stopped for a moment at the window and looked in.

The schoolmaster was sitting at his high desk, with his back to me, apparently haranguing the pupils, who were all gathered together in front of him, with one exception. The one exception was a sturdy white-headed boy, standing apart from all the rest on a stool in a corner—a forlorn little Crusoe, isolated in his own desert island of solitary penal disgrace.

The door, when we got round to it, was ajar; and the schoolmaster's voice reached us plainly, as we both stopped for a minute under the porch.

"Now, boys," said the voice, "mind what I tell you. If I hear another word spoken about ghosts in this school, it will be the worst for all of you. There are no such things as ghosts; and, therefore, any boy who believes in ghosts believes in what can't possibly be; and a boy who belongs to Limmeridge School, and believes in what can't possibly be, sets up his back against reason and discipline, and must be punished accordingly. You all see Jacob Postlethwaite standing up on the stool there in disgrace. He has been punished, not because he said he saw a ghost last night, but because he is too impudent and too obstinate to listen to reason; and because he persists in saying he saw the ghost after I have told him that no such thing can possibly be. If nothing else will do, I mean to cane the ghost out of Jacob Postlethwaite; and if the thing spreads among any of the rest

of you, I mean to go a step farther, and cane the ghost out of the whole school."

"We seem to have chosen an awkward moment for our visit," said Miss Halcombe, pushing open the door at the end of the schoolmaster's address, and leading the way in.

Our appearance produced a strong sensation among the boys. They appeared to think that we had arrived for the express purpose of seeing Jacob Postlethwaite caned.

"Go home all of you to dinner," said the schoolmaster, "except Jacob. Jacob must stop where he is; and the ghost may bring him his dinner, if the ghost pleases."

Jacob's fortitude deserted him at the double disappearance of his schoolfellows and his prospect of dinner. He took his hands out of his pockets, looked hard at his knuckles, raised them with great deliberation to his eyes, and, when they got there, ground them round and round slowly, accompanying the action by short spasms of sniffing, which followed each other at regular intervals—the nasal minute guns of juvenile distress.

"We came here to ask you a question, Mr. Dempster," said Miss Halcombe, addressing the schoolmaster; "and we little expected to find you occupied in exorcising a ghost. What does it all mean? What has really happened?"

"That wicked boy has been frightening the whole school, Miss Halcombe, by declaring that he saw a ghost yesterday evening," answered the master. "And he still persists in his absurd story, in spite of all that I can say to him."

"Most extraordinary," said Miss Halcombe. "I should not have thought it possible that any of the boys had imagination enough to see a ghost. This is a new accession indeed to the hard labour of forming the youthful mind at Limmeridge—and I heartily wish you well through it, Mr. Dempster. In the mean time, let me explain why you see me here, and what it is I want."

She then put the same question to the schoolmaster, which we had asked already of almost every one else in the village. It was met by the same discouraging answer. Mr. Dempster had not set eyes on the stranger of whom we were in search.

"We may as well return to the house, Mr. Hartright," said Miss Halcombe; "the information we want is evidently not to be found."

She had bowed to Mr. Dempster, and was about to leave the schoolroom, when the forlorn position of Jacob Postlethwaite, piteously sniffing on the stool of penitence, attracted her attention as she passed him, and made her stop good-humouredly to speak a word to the little prisoner before she opened the door.

"You foolish boy," she said, "why don't you beg Mr. Dempster's pardon, and hold your tongue about the ghost?"

"Eh!—but I saw t' ghaist," persisted Jacob Postlethwaite, with a stare of terror and a burst of tears.

"Stuff and nonsense! You saw nothing of the kind. Ghost indeed! What ghost——"

"I beg you pardon, Miss Halcombe," interposed the schoolmaster, a little uneasily—"but I think you had better not question the boy. The obstinate folly of his story is beyond all belief; and you might lead him into ignorantly—"

"Ignorantly, what?" inquired Miss Halcombe, sharply.

"Ignorantly shocking your feelings," said Mr. Dempster, looking very much discomposed.

"Upon my word, Mr. Dempster, you pay my feelings a great compliment in thinking them weak enough to be shocked by such an urchin as that!" She turned with an air of satirical defiance to little Jacob, and began to question him directly. "Come!" she said; "I mean to know all about this. You naughty boy, when did you see the ghost!"

"Yester'een, at the gloaming," replied Jacob.

"Oh! you saw it yesterday evening, in the twilight? And what was it like?"

"Arl in white—as a ghaist should be," answered the ghost-seer, with a confidence beyond his years.

"And where was it?"

"Away yander, in t' kirkyard—where a ghaist ought to be."

"As a 'ghaist' should be—where a 'ghaist' ought to be—why, you little fool, you talk as if the manners and customs of ghosts had been familiar to you from your infancy! You have got your story at your fingers' end, at any rate. I suppose I shall hear next that you can actually tell me whose ghost it was?"

"Eh! but I just can," replied Jacob, nodding his head with an air of gloomy triumph.

Mr. Dempster had already tried several times to speak, while Miss Halcombe was examining his pupil; and he now interposed resolutely enough to make himself heard.

"Excuse me, Miss Halcombe," he said, "if I venture to say that you are only encouraging the boy by asking him these questions."

"I will merely ask one more, Mr. Dempster, and then I shall be quite satisfied. Well," she continued, turning to the boy, "and whose ghost was it?"

"T' ghaist of Mistress Fairlie," answered Jacob, in a whisper.

The effect which this extraordinary reply produced on Miss Halcombe, fully justified the anxiety which the schoolmaster had shown to prevent her from hearing it. Her face crimsoned with indignation—she turned upon little Jacob with an angry suddenness which terrified him into a fresh burst of tears—opened her lips to speak to him—then controlled herself—and addressed the master instead of the boy.

"It is useless," she said, "to hold such a child as that responsible for what he says. I have little doubt that the idea has been put into his head by others. If there are people in this village, Mr. Dempster, who have forgotten the respect and gratitude due from every soul in it to my mother's memory, I will find them out; and, if I have any influence with Mr. Fairlie, they shall suffer for it."

"I hope—indeed, I am sure, Miss Halcombe—that you are mistaken," said the schoolmaster. "The matter begins and ends with the boy's own perversity and folly. He saw, or thought he saw, a woman in white, yesterday evening, as he was passing the churchyard; and the figure, real or fancied, was standing by the marble cross, which he and everyone else in Limmeridge knows to be the monument over Mrs. Fairlie's grave. These two circumstances are surely sufficient to have suggested to the boy himself the answer which has so naturally shocked you?"

Although Miss Halcombe did not seem to be convinced, she evidently felt that the schoolmaster's statement of the case was too sensible to be openly combated. She merely replied by thanking him for his attention, and by promising to see him again when her doubts were satisfied. This said, she bowed, and led the way out of the schoolroom.

Throughout the whole of this strange scene, I had stood apart, listening attentively, and drawing my own conclusions. As soon as we were alone again, Miss Halcombe asked me if I had formed any opinion on what I had heard.

"A very strong opinion," I answered; "the boy's story, as I believe, has a foundation in fact. I confess I am anxious to see the monument over Mrs. Fairlie's grave, and to examine the ground about it."

"You shall see the grave."

She paused after making that reply, and reflected a little as we walked on. "What has happened in the schoolroom," she resumed, "has so completely distracted my attention from the subject of the letter, that I feel a little bewildered when I try to return to it. Must we give up all idea of making any further inquiries, and wait to place the thing in Mr. Gilmore's hands, to-morrow?"

"By no means, Miss Halcombe. What has happened in the schoolroom encourages me to persevere in the investigation."

"Why does it encourage you?"

"Because it strengthens a suspicion I felt, when you gave me the letter to read."

"I suppose you had your reasons, Mr. Hart-right, for concealing that suspicion from me till this moment?"

"I was afraid to encourage it in myself. I thought it was utterly preposterous—I distrusted it as the result of some perversity in my own imagination. But I can do so no longer. Not only the boy's own answers to your questions, but even a chance expression that dropped from the schoolmaster's lips in explaining his story, have forced the idea back into my mind. Events may yet prove that idea to be a delusion, Miss Halcombe; but the belief is strong in me, at this moment, that the fancied ghost in the churchyard, and the writer of the anonymous letter, are one and the same person."

She stopped, turned pale, and looked me eagerly in the face.

"What person?"

"The schoolmaster unconsciously told you. When he spoke of the figure that the boy saw

in the churchyard, he called it 'a woman in white.'

"Not Anne Catherick!"

"Yes, Anne Catherick."

She put her hand through my arm, and leaned on it heavily.

"I don't know why," she said, in low tones, "but there is something in this suspicion of yours that seems to startle and unnerve me. I feel——" She stopped, and tried to laugh it off. "Mr. Hartright," she went on, "I will show you the grave, and then go back at once to the house. I had better not leave Laura too long alone. I had better go back, and sit with her."

We were close to the churchyard when she spoke. The church, a dreary building of grey stone, was situated in a little valley, so as to be sheltered from the bleak winds blowing over the moorland all round it. The burial-ground advanced, from the side of the church, a little way up the slope of the hill. It was surrounded by a rough, low stone wall, and was bare and open to the sky, except at one extremity, where a brook trickled down the stony hill side, and a clump of dwarf trees threw their narrow shadows over the short, meagre grass. Just beyond the brook and the trees, and not far from one of the three stone stiles which afforded entrance, at various points, to the churchyard, rose the white marble cross that distinguished Mrs. Fairlie's grave from the humbler monuments scattered about it.

"I need go no farther with you," said Miss Halcombe, pointing to the grave. "You will let me know if you find anything to confirm the idea you have just mentioned to me. Let us meet again at the house."

She left me. I descended at once to the churchyard, and crossed the stile which led directly to Mrs. Fairlie's grave.

The grass about it was too short, and the ground too hard, to show any marks of footsteps. Disappointed thus far, I next looked attentively at the cross, and at the square block of marble below it, on which the inscription was cut.

The natural whiteness of the cross was a little clouded, here and there, by weather-stains; and rather more than one half of the square block beneath it, on the side which bore the inscription, was in the same condition. The other half, however, attracted my attention at once by its singular freedom from stain or impurity of any kind. I looked closer, and saw that it had been cleaned—recently cleaned, in a downward direction from top to bottom. The boundary line between the part that had been cleaned and the part that had not, was traceable wherever the inscription left a blank space of marble—sharply traceable as a line that had been produced by artificial means. Who had begun the cleansing of the marble, and who had left it unfinished?

I looked about me, wondering how the question was to be solved. No sign of a habitation could be discerned from the point at which I was standing: the burial-ground was left in the lonely possession of the dead. I returned to the church, and walked round it till I came to

the back of the building; then crossed the boundary wall beyond, by another of the stone stiles; and found myself at the head of a path leading down into a deserted stone quarry. Against one side of the quarry a little two-room cottage was built; and just outside the door an old woman was engaged in washing.

I walked up to her, and entered into conversation about the church and burial-ground. She was ready enough to talk; and almost the first words she said informed me that her husband filled the two offices of clerk and sexton. I said a few words next in praise of Mrs. Fairlie's monument. The old woman shook her head, and told me I had not seen it at its best. It was her husband's business to look after it; but he had been so ailing and weak, for months and months past, that he had hardly been able to crawl into church on Sundays to do his duty; and the monument had been neglected in consequence. He was getting a little better now; and, in a week or ten days' time, he hoped to be strong enough to set to work and clean it.

This information—extracted from a long rambling answer, in the broadest Cumberland dialect—told me all that I most wanted to know. I gave the poor woman a trifle, and returned at once to Limmeridge House.

The partial cleansing of the monument had evidently been accomplished by a strange hand. Connecting what I had discovered, thus far, with what I had suspected after hearing the story of the ghost seen at twilight, I wanted nothing more to confirm my resolution to watch Mrs. Fairlie's grave, in secret, that evening; returning to it at sunset, and waiting within sight of it till the night fell. The work of cleansing the monument had been left unfinished; and the person by whom it had been begun might return to complete it.

On getting back to the house, I informed Miss Halcombe of what I intended to do. She looked surprised and uneasy, while I was explaining my purpose; but she made no positive objection to the execution of it. She only said, "I hope it may end well." Just as she was leaving me again, I stopped her to inquire, as calmly as I could, after Miss Fairlie's health. She was in better spirits; and Miss Halcombe hoped she might be induced to take a little walking exercise while the afternoon sun lasted.

I returned to my own room, to resume setting the drawings in order. It was necessary to do this, and doubly necessary to keep my mind employed on anything that would help to distract my attention from myself, and from the hopeless future that lay before me. From time to time, I paused in my work to look out of window and watch the sky as the sun sank nearer and nearer to the horizon. On one of those occasions I saw a figure on the broad gravel walk under my window. It was Miss Fairlie.

I had not seen her since the morning; and I had hardly spoken to her then. Another day at Limmeridge was all that remained to me; and after that day my eyes might never look on her again. This thought was enough to hold me at

the window. I had sufficient consideration for her, to arrange the blind so that she might not see me if she looked up; but I had no strength to resist the temptation of letting my eyes, at least, follow her as far as they could on her walk.

She was dressed in a brown cloak, with a plain black silk gown under it. On her head was the same simple straw hat which she had worn on the morning when we first met. A veil was attached to it now, which hid her face from me. By her side, trotted a little Italian greyhound, the pet companion of all her walks, smartly dressed in a scarlet cloth wrapper, to keep the sharp air from his delicate skin. She did not seem to notice the dog. She walked straight forward, with her head drooping a little, and her arms folded in her cloak. The dead leaves which had whirled in the wind before me, when I had heard of her marriage engagement in the morning, whirled in the wind before her, and rose and fell and scattered themselves at her feet, as she walked on in the pale waning sunlight. The dog shivered and trembled, and pressed against her dress impatiently for notice and encouragement. But she never heeded him. She walked on, farther and farther away from me, with the dead leaves whirling about her on the path—walked on, till my aching eyes could see her no more, and I was left alone again with my own heavy heart.

In another hour's time, I had done my work, and the sunset was at hand. I got my hat and coat in the hall, and slipped out of the house without meeting anyone.

The clouds were wild in the western heaven, and the wind blew chill from the sea. Far as the shore was, the sound of the surf swept over the intervening moorland, and beat drearily in my ears, when I entered the churchyard. Not a living creature was in sight. The place looked lonelier than ever, as I chose my position, and waited and watched, with my eyes on the white cross that rose over Mrs. Fairlie's grave.

CHERBOURG.

III. AMONG THE SAILORS.

THE Port Militaire, which the reader is supposed to be contemplating, is of later construction than the Digue, and was a necessary complement to that great work. The Digue once established, the anchorage was, no doubt, protected, and might protect a fleet. But how refit and repair the fleet, or how add to it? A dockyard and arsenal were necessary, and were resolved upon by Napoleon in a decree dated the 15th April, 1803. The plan comprised an establishment of the first class, with an Avant-port and two basins.

The Avant-port (or outer basin, which you find on your right hand on entering the port) occupies a site which the sagacious eye of Vauban had long before designed for the same purpose. Its lines were traced out on the 9th May, 1803, and the work commenced with great spirit. Soldiers volunteered to labour,

in the antique Roman fashion. Workmen poured in from all parts of France. The basins were hollowed by mining; the rock, of hard quartz, being blown asunder by repeated gunpowder explosions, while the sea was kept out of it, till wanted, by a special Digue. From 1809, more than six thousand Spanish prisoners were employed at Cherbourg; and, to the toil of these poor fellows—drawn from their sunny land to, perhaps, the coldest and most rainy town in France—the port owes the fosse which surrounds it, and the ramparts forming its inland girdle.

The Avant-port was an affair of ten years' work and millions of francs of expense. Napoleon visited it in May, 1811; but its flooding in August, 1813, was a spectacle reserved for Marie Louise alone, his Majesty being at that time at the head of the grande armée and too busy. The empress descended to the bottom of the basin, and was the last person inside it before the immersion, which took place on August 27th, in the presence of the Bishop of Coutances (who said the benediction) and of twenty-five thousand spectators, a squadron manœuvring outside in the Rade the while. One must read the publications in which the French record all these fine doings, one must see the animation with which they talk of them, in order to appreciate the pride and joy which Cherbourg is to the French nation. The avant-port is thirty feet deep, at low water, during spring tides, and capable of accommodating a dozen sail of the line.

The story of the opening of the still greater basin of Napoleon the Third is fresher in public recollection. During the interval between the Avant-port and it, was made the "Bassin Charles Dix," already mentioned as lying to the northward of the first-named, and which was opened in the presence of the Duc d'Angoulême in the autumn of 1829. Blasting in rock was the *modus operandi* here also. The two basins are of the same depth, and are united by a turning-bridge and by flood-gates.

Every French government has done something for the Port Militaire, and none has pushed it more energetically than the present emperor. We all remember the spectacle of last autumn, when the Bassin Napoléon III. received within its granite-clad sides the eager sea; and when the Ville de Nantes glided from her building-slip into the water, amidst a cheering hardly drowned by the cannon-firing. This basin contains four docks and five slips. It lies inside the Avant-port, and is capable of holding a still larger number of vessels of the line. The French writers calculate, indeed, that, what with the Rade and the three basins of the dockyard, a hundred line-of-battle ships might enjoy the protection of Cherbourg and its batteries. Yet, one still hears whispers of fresh works there, to extend the accommodation and resources of the dockyard. The bakery, mentioned in my last, will be a very fine building, and I believe that the barrack accommodation is considered insufficient as yet. The present barracks for gendarmerie, artillery, and infantry,

are grouped together at the back of the port, and seem airy and lofty structures.

What strikes one most in the port is not so much the absolute amount of acreage covered by it as the conveniences it enjoys, and the neatness and airiness of the Ateliers, and other buildings. The timber shed is nine hundred and fifty-eight feet long, and supported by one hundred and thirty stone pillars. The large storehouses are close to the basins. Steamers can coal alongside the wharf, whereas with us at Portsmouth they must employ boys and hulks. All these are elements of advantage to Cherbourg, even though it is not put forward by the French officers as a very great building port.

Yet we must do it justice in that particular also. Some very fine ships have issued from Cherbourg: le Friedland, le Henri IV., and several others. Ten ships could be built there at a time. The Cales de Construction, or building sheds, are planned on the same solid and liberal principle as other edifices there: particularly to the covered sheds in the north-eastern part of the yard, the roofs of which rest on arches, supported by piers of granite and slate. There is not much ship-building going on at Cherbourg just now, though we must not forget the activity of the last ten years and the resources of Toulon and Brest. What is most interesting in the Cales de Construction of Cherbourg at present, is the progress of the new frigate *Normandie*. This is a frigate of unexampled size and armament, sharp both at bow and stern, and intended to be plated with iron on the new principle. The hull is well advanced, and covered with labourers hammering away. A French gentleman, employed in the iron trade, is at Cherbourg, in communication with the authorities respecting the plating. Otherwise, there is nothing in the building sheds to excite particular attention; no overstrained activity about this bit of work is to be remarked, though the whole establishment is a scene of steady and continuous activity. Of the amount of military stores in the arsenal I had no opportunity of forming an opinion. The armoury is arranged with coquetish elegance of taste. You pass many rows of burnished cannon lying dismantled, alongside pyramids of brilliant shot.

Before quitting the Port Militaire through its well-defended walls, let us sum up, in a brief paragraph, the elements which make up Cherbourg. It is a French port, near England, well supplied with resources, capable of harbouring about a hundred vessels while building ten, protected by the largest breakwater in the world and more than six hundred cannon. This is, I think, a liberal résumé of the pretensions of a place which, a century since, hardly outvied Boulogne.

And now for a glance at the social Cherbourg, and the personnel of the French navy.

Cherbourg is execrably dull, as all the young "aspirants" and "enseignes de vaisseau" are unanimously agreed. In this respect it is far inferior to Brest, which, again, is inferior to

Toulon. There is a theatre, to be sure, where a company of strollers occasionally play indifferent vaudevilles. And, for the "men," there are "spectacles"—the Battle of Solferino, for instance—intended to keep up the patriotic spirit and the military vanity of the race. But, after these amusements, there remain only the cafés—poor imitations of the brilliant cafés of the Paris Boulevards—which line the quay along the commercial basin mentioned before. Enter any of these at any hour, almost as early in the forenoon as you like, and you find military and naval officers playing billiards, cards, or dominoes, smoking, or reading the journals. Light literature is the fashion, as in our own seaports. There is the *Moniteur de la Flotte*, to be sure, which contains all the naval news; but it has a feuilleton with a story. Then there is the *Charivari*, where they have been fond, lately, of caricaturing the British army. Another publication, *Le Monde Illustré*, deserves harsher notice. Some of the numbers of this journal contain papers about the treatment of French prisoners in England last war—a rather old grievance. In one anecdote, we are represented as encouraging a shark, by periodical pork, to swim round one of our prison-ships in the West Indies, to prevent the poor Gauls from escaping. In another, a British nobleman is represented as visiting a prison in England, on which occasion he naturally leaves his horse outside. Returning to mount, milord misses the gallant steed. "Where is my horse?" he asks of one of the prisoners. "Eaten, my lord." "What! Eat a horse! and in ten minutes?" "Yes, my lord," is the reply; "five to kill and strip, five to devour him!" And the narrator chuckles over the daring gaiety, in such trials, of his French countrymen. Who would think that, of these stories, the shark one was a joke of poor Captain Marryat's against his own countrymen as dealing with their own British deserters; and that the second is told of a peer, Lord "Cordova," or some such name, with a title never heard of in England? The author of these stupid calumnies in *Le Monde Illustré* is a certain M. Léon Gozlan (a Jewish gentleman, I believe), who is in some degree known in the French comic world. It must be added that three or four French naval officers, to whom M. Gozlan's fictions were quoted (and for whose courtesy, on every occasion, we here return our best thanks), treated them with contempt. But the ignorant mass—and the ignorance of the uneducated part of the French, concerning England, is beyond belief—are corrupted by this kind of thing, absurd though it be.

The first thing that strikes one about French naval officers is the fact that they are gentlemen, compared with the general run of men of corresponding positions seen in France. It is not only—though this, too, is the case—that the navy is a profession in favour among good French families, but the manners of the men are agreeable, quiet, sensible, ac-

complished, well bred. Perhaps an Englishman is prejudiced in their favour by finding them comparatively so like English. The reserved, solid kind of manner, the shaved chin and lip, occasionally the physical type of face, and almost always the dress, create altogether a curious amount of resemblance. English, though perhaps not often spoken, is always, more or less, understood among French naval men. You find Maury's *Sailing Directions* in their rooms. One middle-aged officer mentioned that he had read two hundred of our novels. Several circumstances tend to isolate French naval officers from the ordinary modern France. Not only is the regular isolation, especially from military society, stronger among them than you would expect to find it, but I doubt whether the French public does them, ordinarily, full justice. Many a Frenchman whom you meet in travelling will coolly give up the marine to you, in discussion, as inferior, though willing to contend to any extent for the superiority of the French army, the French literature, and everything else French. Yet how unjust is this! What can be more certain than that the French navy has fought admirably; did we ever get more decided advantages over it than our Marlboroughs, Wolfes, and Wellingtons did over the French army? An impression that they hardly get justice from their countrymen—that they are made the scapegoats of the national vanity—is calculated to throw them very much upon themselves and their profession, and the result is probably an increased devotion to it. Their political leanings—but of these a foreigner can only know very little (especially now, when the political silence of France is felt like a heavy—too calm—atmosphere, to strangers)—seem to be, in accordance with their naval position, less marked than those of most professions. They must hate the uncertainty which throws them, one day, into the hands of a different government from that of the day before; and it is possible that the Empire is accepted as a practical working government among them, even by the cadets (who must be numerous) of Legitimist or Orleanist families. At the same time, our British institutions seemed respected and understood by those with whom we talked; our navy certainly is; and it is a curious and wholesome symptom that they incline to think "Charley Napier" too critical on, and too much an alarmist about, his country's navy and naval policy.

The British and French arrangements as to the personnel of their naval services differ in some points worth remarking upon.

Their youngsters enter later in life, as a general rule, than ours do. Their average age at going afloat is above sixteen. Their training is more liberal, as regards instruction, than ours was until lately, and is managed by a college, and by a training-ship in Brest roads. I know no reason for supposing them to be better sea officers, measured by the good old test of handling a ship; and we could, no doubt, match any individual officer among them in scientific and

other accomplishments by some individual officer of our own. *Ceteris paribus*,—as entering later, their average book knowledge ought to be higher than ours; and I dare say that in the finer accomplishments (let us say, music) they have somewhat the advantage of us. We must not overrate all that kind of thing, however, nor forget that spirit, sinew, traditions, and experience, are the bases of the greatness of naval men. The French navy has made great strides within thirty years, and we may learn something from it. Yet, in passing from one "set" of the rising British generation—say at Portsmouth—to another of the rising French generation—say at Cherbourg—an observer does not feel that he has got into any remarkably higher region. To read some of our writers one would fancy that it was like going from Lilliput to Brobdingnag.

Having entered later, the grades of their service are different among the French. From aspirant of the second, they pass to aspirant of the first class; and from that to the rank of *Enseigne de Vaisseau*. We commonly translate that title by Midshipman in England. This, however, conveys a false impression. The "*enseigne*" messes with the lieutenants: which our mid does not, even after "passing" and becoming mate. The *enseigne* has charge of a watch; not the case with a mid. But the *enseigne de vaisseau*, though better off in status than our mate, has a long time to wait for his promotion; and this is a detail of which French naval officers complain. He remains often, for years, virtually in the position of a junior kind of lieutenant, without acquiring a lieutenant's rank and title.

The rank of "master" is unknown in the French service. It seems to have arisen in old times, with us, from the primitive distinction (so noticeable in Blake's days) between the fighting captain and the sailing captain of a man-of-war. The master ranks "with and after" the lieutenants, and is specially charged with the observations and the log: for which (jointly with the captain) he is responsible. In a French ship, the observations are managed by the officers in turns; and it has been suggested that we should imitate this arrangement. But, there are several advantages in keeping up the grade of master; and one is, that it opens a path to commissions to a class of families less well off or influential than those from which the service as a whole is officered. Observe, by the way, here, that there is no promotion from the ranks—no "coming in through the hawse holes"—in the French navy, any more than in our own. A family which could not manage a cadetship for one of its youngsters in England, can often set him going en route to master, as a master's assistant.

The French do not flog in their navy. They punish by imprisonment, by the usual restrictions on grog, and so forth. But they can, by the operation of the "inscription," keep a man afloat as long as they like; and the non-corporal punishment principle is not strictly carried out. In the case of certain offences—

such as offend a man's own shipmates as well as the laws of discipline—he is set to run the gauntlet even now. But nautical punishments have always been savage. "Tarring and feathering" and "keel hauling" are as old as *Cœur de Lion's* times; though at that epoch the British fleet was commanded by no less a personage than an archbishop.

Such are a few of the differences between the two great navies of Europe. Each may learn something from the other; and there is an honourable rivalry between them at present, untinged by malignity and accompanied by a mutual respect. An English naval man meets hospitality and courtesy—even without letters of introduction—at Cherbourg, from his rivals; and he will only laugh, like a man of esprit, if he is asked (with a merry twinkle of the eye), by a French capitaine of the older school, whether, when he was in the African squadron, he ever picked up, by mistake for a slave, a Portuguese merchant craft? Apropos of this bit of professional humour, the French navy has been growling lately at the emperor's too gallant resolution to return the Austrian traders captured during the late war. What, ask our friends, are war and prize-money meant for? They feel it the more, because they are, as a body, poor men; and that, even in comparison with our navy, which is a poor profession enough, pecuniarily, Heaven knows.

Let us take leave of Cherbourg with a few observations on its general significance and importance to us; made in no bellicose spirit, however.

Here we have a new French dockyard and port, opposite to us; protected by almost unrivalled defences; capable of sheltering, refitting, and repairing a fleet; connected with Paris by telegraph and by a railway, the business trains on which do the journey in ten hours. Such a place is a new arm added to France for purposes of attack or defence; a distinct addition of strength since the last great war, when there was no French port between Brest and Dunkirk—the latter not suitable to vessels of the larger class. It is clearly a place constructed with military objects. Commerce did not require it, and can never support it; nor are there any internal needs which it meets. It stands on the rocky and rainy coast of a remote Norman peninsula, interesting solely to Frenchmen, as projecting (like a threatening arm) towards England.

Strong as it is now, its efficiency is increasing. Fresh-guns appear on its Digue, fresh batteries among its rocks and heights, and new buildings rise in its arsenal. A submarine telegraph line is, even now, connecting it with the whole coast; and, before long, there will be branch railway communication, directer than at present, between it and the upper parts of Normandy. In these steam days, it is eight hours' distance by sea from Havre, and less than thirty hours' distance from Brest.

Cherbourg presents, in fact, one more place of first-rate importance for our squadrons to watch,

in case of a war, and one situated so as to be available for offence, while all but impregnable in itself. Blockading, however, is confessedly a more difficult task than formerly, because steam makes the imprisoned squadron independent of the wind, and enables it to run for new quarters, or join another squadron, with a facility unknown before. Then, supposing such French squadron worsted, its chances of escape are greater with steam, and there is this new port of Cherbourg to run for and refit in. Especially, however, will it be valuable as a support to an invading force. And, while this fact will always compel us to keep a large fleet in the Channel; so it will leave us, of course, fewer vessels to protect our distant commerce. Hence the mischief of allowing the French to get ahead of us in the number of any class of vessels, especially frigates, which they were said by several authorities to be superior to us in, at the beginning of this year. Hence the more than mischief of allowing them to be absolutely superior in the number of building slips in their dockyards, which, also, is unfortunately the present case.

Cherbourg must be considered as one more element of danger to the peace of Europe, inasmuch as the consciousness of strength is a provocation to use it, especially where its existence is a contrast to the memories and traditions of past times. The emperor may be thoroughly pacific, the French people may be disposed to acquiesce in peace; but, neither of these facts, though they may save us for a time from an act of merely aggressive war, can be expected to hinder the European politics of France from being influenced by her new scale of naval strength. It is not enough that we should be safe from invasion; we must not be outstripped in political importance, we must not be liable to be pushed aside from our first-class position, in any part of the world where our flag flies or our language is known. We are apt to forget how much our national importance depends on our downright strength, and that if we are strong by dint of being rich, we are rich, and originally became so, by being strong. Losing our naval power we should lose our colonies; then, by degrees, our trade; and of a certainty, sooner or later, our safety at home. It is not a question that will bear trifling with, and he who pool-poohs our naval preparations is really contributing to our ultimate weakness in every other department.

OUR EYE-WITNESS AND THE PERFORMING BULL.

"She's coming out," screamed the smallest boy, with the whitest face, the most beetrooty nose, the thinnest blouse, and the most precocious intellect ever seen or heard of.

He was perched upon the spikes of the railings which separate No.—say, one thousand, Castle-street, from the back entrance, or stage door, of the Alhambra Circus. From this place of security he spake, in the words just quoted, to a young friend in a red comforter, stationed

immediately beneath him, who, but for the boy on the spikes, would have looked skinny and small too. But, the boy on the spikes exhausted the subject of skinniness, just as his nose exhausted that of redness.

"*She's coming out,*" squeaked the impaled boy again, with a noble disregard of gender.

For, it was the performing Bull to which the infant on the spikes thus alluded, and it was outside the private residence of this animal that a little crowd had assembled, with that keen appreciation of eleemosynary sights, which is one of the most remarkable characteristics of our race. They were there to see him come out for an airing.

There is always a certain interest attached to the private life of great public characters; so your Eye-witness, who happened to be passing, stopped and joined the knot of spectators, thinking that he, too, would like to see this performer emerge from his lodgings. His carriage was waiting for him at the door, and the E.-W. was soon in possession of a commanding place in a front row.

It was a curious circumstance in connexion with this particular assembly, that its members manifested a courtesy in reference to this ready resignation of these same front places, which the E.-W. does not remember to have ever noticed before—except on one occasion, when he found himself in a crowd outside the door of a certain public-house in which it was rumoured that a prize-fighter had suddenly gone mad. There was the same readiness to accommodate him with a good place, manifested, on that particular evening, which he now observed in the assembly gathered round the mouth of the little covered way which led from the Bull's private apartments to the street. Thanks to this self-denying retirement on the part of the crowd, the Eye-witness soon found himself in a very good position indeed, with nothing but the small boy, whose friend was on the spikes, between him and the Bull's door. [It was a remarkable thing that, though these front places were so easily to be obtained, there was a brisk demand for all sorts of distant accommodation, and flights of door-steps, shop entrances, and even lamp-posts, were inquired for briskly.]

"What do the Bull do?" asked the small boy below, of the smaller boy above.

"Do? stands up on her two behind legs, and all sorts of games. And, won't some of yer get gored down there presently, that's all," he added, in a louder key. Whereat, and at the sudden appearance through the open door of a broad black forehead and two white horns, the populace was moved to a more modest retirement than ever, and the small boy in front of the E.-W. commenced butting against that gentleman's legs to such an extent that he was glad to let him get behind, preferring the contingency of the Bull's escape to the certainty of having his shins bruised and his toes trampled upon by this turbulent infant.

Such a comfortable little Bull! A short-horned, plump, satiny, highly-groomed little Bull. Eminently satisfactory; but so little. He

stepped up his inclined plane, and was upon the platform of his car in no time, as good as gold.

It must be owned that the general aspect of affairs was not imposing. The Eye-witness had had visions of a triumphal car, with a black Bull of the largest possible size on the top of it, and drawn by six milk-white steeds. He had pictured this to himself, and had made up his mind to see the white horses, with the pink rims to their eyes and flesh-coloured noses, such as he loves; consequently, a team of ordinary grey carriage-horses, drawing a break with some planks across the top of it, on which was perched an animal not much bigger than a calf, but compact and well-made, was rather disappointing, and had rather the look of a procession which was to end in the slaughter-house.

There was one result brought about by the impressive spectacle, which was probably contemplated by the management that organised it. This was the developing in the casual spectator of a burning thirst to see how this very comfortable little animal conducted himself in his professional capacity inside the quaint walls of the Alhambra of Leicester Fields. Indeed it must be frankly admitted that his countenance was not promising, and it was curious to observe his bovine indifference to the novel situation in which he found himself and the novel circumstances under which he was placed.

The scene is now, with the reader's permission, shifted from the back slums of Castle-street to the interior of the Alhambra Circus. The time is two in the afternoon. The wind north-east, and the general aspect of affairs the reverse of encouraging. What shall be said of circus performances in the daytime? Shall we say that they are calculated to induce morbid views of life generally, that he who assists at such solemnisations will in the pauses of the same be found—especially with the wind in the east—to despond about his prospects, to see all the weak points in his previous life with an exceeding distinctness, and every lichen and parasitical excrescence upon his rocks ahead for the future? Shall we say that at such periods the human finger and thumb are averse to the duty of extracting from the waistcoat-pocket that sixpence which the woman in the *black muslin cap* expects in return for a programme fourteen inches by eight? Shall we say that as the sufferer fishes and dives for this sixpence (wishing he had a fourpenny piece instead) he looks upon the woman in the black cap with feelings nearly allied to detestation; that he casts bloodthirsty looks at her waistband, and thinks what a good place that would be for the Performing Bull to impale her by, and bear her off upon one of his horns to his native country where she should perish from not knowing the Spanish equivalent for "Whatever you please to give, sir?" No; nothing of this shall be said; it shall only be recorded that the Alhambra, as the Eye-witness saw it, before the gas was lighted; the Alhambra, with modified daylight insinuating itself by creeks and crannies; the Alhambra, with fog in those galleries which rise

to inaccessible heights, and with about seventy people dotted about here and there; was a spectacle which was not exhilarating. And from the shuddering indulged in by the audience, it appeared that people enough were walking over their graves to have filled the place even to the topmost range of seats.

These cemeterial pedestrians, however, were not to be got, and so the performances were played to rather a small audience. There was the usual circus business to be gone through before the Bull appeared, and very well it was done. The dislocation of limb enjoyed by the acrobat boy on stilts, left nothing to be desired—except a bandage for one's eyes that one might not see him: while the witticisms of the clown were only rendered incomplete by a want of cotton enough in one's ears to render them inaudible. There was the usual severe man who is not to be trifled with in the middle of the arena, there were the usual graceful ladies who do beautiful things with scarfs and jump through rings, there were the usual muscular gentlemen capable of riding on every part of a horse except his back, and equally at home upon the extreme tip of his ear and the last hair of his tail.

All these things preceded, and led up to, the great event of the day, the achievements of the Performing Bull.

It may, perhaps, be remembered that the last exhibition of this kind attended and reported on by the Eye-witness was that of the Talking and Performing Fish, and that, though it was in no very flattering terms that he commented upon that most unsatisfactory entertainment, he was yet moved with a warm admiration and regard for the poor seal, which had such a good face and was such a bad actor. It would seem as if that studying of the ingenious arts, which we learn, on good authority, is attended with such beneficial results to the human race, was not without its softening influence also on the brute creation. This little bull, trotting into the arena, and up to its master, as a dog might—this creature, *for a bull*, so singularly docile and intelligent—became instantly a pet with the audience. It may be that the sight of strength in combination with docility is always pleasant; it may be that this animal's beauty is prepossessing, for, though small of stature, the bull is of very beautiful proportions, and exquisitely made; certain it is that he has made his way to the national heart of John, his namesake, and is likely to be a popular character.

It is not so much the things done that are astonishing, as that a Bull should do them. The performance simply consists of a certain number of leaps over the usual bars, which look like peppermint sticks, and through the usual chastely decorated hoops. The Bull is also made to stand on three legs, to go round the arena on his knees, to lie down as if dead, or to kneel in the action of a camel waiting for its rider. He is also placed in a peculiarly humiliating and ridiculous position, with one of his fore-feet on a sort of pedestal and the other on a kind of dwarf obelisk,

which is probably the "act" alluded to by our young friend outside, when he stated that the Bull would stand up on his two "behind" legs.

One of the great features in all the undertakings of this very admirable performer, is his excessive painstaking. Take especial notice of his carefulness, and observe how he picks his steps through the hoops and over the peppermint sticks. He is a hard breather, too, and in his extreme anxiety to do right, puffs out his breath like the jets of steam from an engine. Observe, again, how incommensurate an effort all this running is to him, and how he subsides into a walk the instant he is through a hoop or over a bar: not cantering round the intermediate space as other artists do. Let not his self-command, too, pass unnoticed, as it is exhibited at the conclusion of his career when he allows himself to be lifted off the ground on a sort of platform, and to be carried out of the circus on ten men's shoulders, without so much as staggering on his pedestal, or moving in any way, except to turn his head from side to side in mute and satisfied inspection of the audience. He bears this carrying process, by-the-by, which is very similar to that submitted to on great occasions by his Holiness the Pope, a great deal better than that prosperous potentate: who always conveys the impression, when seen under these circumstances, of being a sufferer from intense sickness.

With this submission to being chaired, our friend (the Bull, not the Pope) may be said to conclude the list of his achievements. Though a passive "act," it is by no means an easy one, and is quite as creditable to his powers of endurance as that which immediately precedes it, and in which it is his duty to submit to certain attempts to get upon his back, made by a gentleman who is persuaded to "step up" from among the audience, and who would look like one of the public if he did not look still more like a pantaloon out of work.

Not the least of the interest of this curious exhibition was in the by-play. There was in the very clumsiness with which the different feats were performed, something which was quite touching, so strongly did it convey the impression that the Bull was a zealous Bull, doing his best. It was surely a good sight, too, to see him stop in his career at a word from his master, and trot up to him in the middle of the arena at a sign; and throughout to detect an obstinate temper conquered, and an aversion overcome, indicated from time to time by that (in all quadrupeds) ungovernable organ, the tail, which lashed itself about in almost ceaseless movement against the Bull's black sides.

Altogether, then, the Performing Bull is a highly satisfactory character. And as he does not (as the Fish did) profess to be a Talking Bull, he may be said to keep faith in all respects with the public, except, perhaps, in the one matter of size: the woodcut outside the walls representing him as standing at least six feet from the ground, and altogether losing

sight of that comfortable and compact quality which is one of his leading characteristics, and greatest attractions.

DRIFT.

LETTERS ON EDWARD THE FIRST'S SCOTCH WAR.

TOWARDS the close of the thirteenth century no less than thirteen persons laid claim to the throne of Scotland on the death of Queen Margaret, "the maid of Norway." Gradually the number of competitors was reduced to two—John Baliol, Lord of Galloway, and Robert Bruce, Earl of Annandale, both descended from a younger brother of King Malcolm the Fourth of Scotland; and of these two, the King of England, Edward the First, delivered his judgment in favour of John Baliol, after a report from a commission of investigation into the rights of the claimants. As the year 1293 waned, Baliol, disgusted with the arrogance of his patron Edward, takes advantage of the rupture between England and France to perfect an alliance with Philip the Fourth of France, and declares war against England. Confiding in the assistance of the French monarch, Baliol, formally renouncing his allegiance, sends King Edward a letter by the Superior of the Cordeliers, the contents of which so exasperated the English king that he swore to reduce the whole of Scotland, and his efforts to keep his oath sowed the seeds of that animosity which existed for centuries between the people of England and Scotland. King Edward, on his way to besiege Berwick, having suffered losses both by sea and land sufficient to make him glad of any assistance, gains over Bruce by the promise of that crown to which the English king had so lately ignored the earl's claim. Subsequently the king wins Berwick, after feigning to raise the siege, and here seven thousand Scotch are reputed to have been slain.

The Letters (among the miscellaneous letters in the Public Record Office) which follow this brief précis of events of the year 1295, were certainly written after the king's great victory at Dunbar, on the 27th April, 1296; they are translated from the Latin original, and their manly, simple character smack to me very much of a great captain. John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey and Sussex, also called John Earl of Warenne, the writer, was one of King Edward's principal commanders, who was left in the control and lieutenantancy of Scotland when his master had completed the temporary subjugation of the country.

Macduff, it will be observed, was here, as in our earliest memories, a valiant thane fighting on the right side and against the usurper.

To the noble and honourable prince and his most dear lord, if it pleases him, my lord Edward by the grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, his servant John, Earl of Warenne, greeting, reverence, and all honour. Sire, the Bishop of Glasgow and the Earl of Carrick (Robert Bruce), and the Steward of Scotland, are to come to us on this Thursday before the feast of St. Lawrence, to ratify the agreements about which a

parley had taken place between Sir Henry de Percy (an ancestor of Hotspur, and a commissioner with Robert de Clifford to take the oaths of fealty), and themselves. Sire, as soon as these things shall be done and settled, we will march onward through the country to quiet it and establish its condition in the best manner that we can. Sire, know ye that the Earl of Strathern has taken Mak Dof and his two sons, and we have sent for them in order that we may have them at Berwick on the Eve of St. Lawrence, and when Macdof shall be come, men will deal with him as men ought to deal with false traitors.

We have sent to take my Lord Henry de Lazom who is in your castle of Aberdeen, and plays there the "grand seigneur;" but whether he is taken or not we cannot yet well tell you, for at the departure of this letter we have yet no answer from those who have gone to take him, but if he be taken he shall be honoured according to his deserts.

My lord, William de Douglas is in your castle of Berwick in good irons and in good hold, because he did not bring his hostages on the day appointed as the others have done. Sire, when we shall know other news we will send it to you. Written at Berwick, 1st day of August.

Sire, Sir William Douglas is a prisoner in your castle of Berwick in irons and close prison, thanks be to God, and for good cause, as one who has met with his deserts. And I pray you, Sire, if it please you, that you in no wise set him free, either for ransom or entreaty, until you know all the causes of complaints against his person. Upon y^e ancient enemies may God avenge you.

A Scotch writer, Mr. William Stewart, who towards the middle of the sixteenth century produced a metrical translation of the history of Scotland of Hector Boece, which he called "The Buik of the Chroniclis of Scotland," defines Bruce's reasons for leaguings himself with King Edward against his native country, in vernacular language which may be a curiosity to those of our readers south of the Tweed:

For-quhy King Edward, as it is icht to wit,
To Robert Bruce befor had made promit,
Sud that he wald him help and mak supple
Of Johnne the Balliol to revengit be,
That he alway sould tak the Bruceis part
Agane the Balliol glaidlie with his hart;
And all his richt agane to him restoir,
That he had gevin King Johnne of befor.
Or ellis doutles, as ye sall understand,
This King Edward had nocht camd in Scotland,
For all the power with him that he led,
War nocht he knew the Bruce sic friendis hed
Into Scotland, quhilk, glaidlie with thair hart,
That ay war reddie for to tak his part.
And als that tyme his querrell foundit he,
Nocht for his richt bot for the Bruceis supple
Or than he had nocht tane sic thing on hand,
For all his pomp for to invaid Scotland.
The Bruce also as ye ma weill advert,
With this Edward wald nevir tak sic part
War nocht he traistit, as I trow wes trew
Be his supple agane for to reskow
Fra Johnne the Balliote, ye ma understand,
The crown fra him that he held of Scotland.
And mairattour richt icht is to consider,
Quhen all ressonis collectit ar togidder,
The Scottis lordis had nocht tane sic part
That da with Bruce so glaidlie with thair hart,
War nocht tha put thair hoip into sic thing,
That all wes done to mak the Bruce thair king;

Or than King Edward had camid littil speid
In that mater, thair of half ye no dreid.
Quhairfor the Bruce hes done all that he mycht
That da in feild for to reskew his rycht
Agane King Johnne, and for na either thing
And for no plesour of the Inglis king.

TWISTING THE BOWSTRING.

THE green bowstring—that wholesome ameliorator of Turkish despotism—was secretly twisting for Abdul-Medjid that very August morning when in the Royal Addlehead (Austrian Lloyd's) steamer I clove through the white woolly fog that filled the Bosphorus, and swept down into the Golden Horn. The plot, too, unseen to me, was thickening like that fog.

But for a dark cypress pinnacle or two, and here and there something that looked like a gilt tencup turned bottom upwards, and which I supposed not irrationally to be the dome of a mosque, and but for here and there, I say, the needle-pointed spire of a minaret crowned by a crescent, that seething city might have very well passed for sable London, and Galata might have been the Tower Wharf on a November morning. It was very cool and steamy, and my unromantic mind was occupied with but one thought, and that thought was hot coffee. I would, I vow, at that selfish and material moment, have given a whole haremful of dove-eyed Circassians for a potful of smoking coffee: so jaded, sleepy, befogged, and tired was I. I had come to see the city of the Sultan, and I found myself at a muggy place that looked like St. Katharine's Docks in a November fog. And this is what you call travelling!

We had been up romantically early, by preconceived poetical plan (for at poetical places every one likes to be poetical)—thrice in the morning I think it was—to see the Royal Addlehead enter the Bosphorus. A ghastly réveil it was, rising hurriedly by lamplight, looking hopelessly through the still opaque porthole, and seeing a grey sea racing by with ferocious speed, and with a slight effervescence of rage on its clenched lips—rising by lamplight (Lord help us!), staggering into one another's trousers, and crawling hopelessly up-stairs for the delightful view, looking like wretches saved from a wreck, and who had just heard a sail was in sight, yet were too broken down by hunger and misery to cheer even at that. It was delightful indeed; the demon who presides over the Home Department of Shan (a most onerous and important post of the Satanic Dis-united Kingdom) must have got up very early too, that morning, and been specially delighted at our empty, ridiculous raptures at what would have been "exquisite" if a great brewer's-vat smoking white fog had not swallowed it all up and left us nothing, not even our great Consul's palace—not even a glimpse of the English burial-ground on the cliff at Scutari.

And here let me leave the deck and go below again, to dilate with bilious spleen on the melancholy joys of early rising, and the doleful

penitential pleasures of travellers' ante-day-breaks. The chilly, sickly half-hour before the red blood flows back into the corpse cheek of dead Day, and the Lazarus "morn," led by a sunbeam, emerges radiant and divine from the burial tomb of night. Waking by lamplight—the light you seem to have shut your tired, bored eyes upon but half an hour ago—how you grope for the never-to-be-found watch—how you linger in a stupid, imbecile, irresolute way, watching your watch's hands chase each other over your dial—the tall quick brother dodging and running round his slow fat brother, till by-and-by, like pulling out a tooth, drowsy and unrefreshed, you throw off the clothes suddenly, and put one shrinking foot out into the cold-water air, just as if you were bathing, and it was a little too late in the season. No one turned out yet; steward—a wily Greek—asleep, with his head on a pile of camp-stools, and a cigarette, long since gone out, clipped in his dirty fingers. Every curtain drawn across the little bins and dog-kennels of beds. One alone (that vivacious little clerk from a silk house in Smyrna, who calls himself a Macedonian, and prides himself on being a compatriot of Alexander the Great) has in the contortions of sleep wound himself round his curtain, so that he looks like a corpse decently swathed and bandaged for sea burial. The clothes of everybody hang still on the outside pegs, or repose on the horseshair cushions of the divan seat beneath. Yes, the young Turkish priest has taken off his neat green turban, so trimly and dandily twisted; his sash and long black robe, and his neat boots and outside goloshes lie there upon the floor, waiting for him. The Bohemian baker, and the learned Russian professor, Alexis Strongenoff, snore in perfect time and tune, and there, by the Bohemian baker's bed, is that wonderful green conical hat with the broad green ribbon and steel buckle, which has been, during our passage down the Danube and across the treacherous Black Sea, the wonder and delight of many. There, too, on peg No. 4, right-hand side, is the curious flat, broad, white cap of the Russian Colonel Karkoff, a deadly player at pool, and a very gallant soldier, though he does wear what resembles a large white unbaked muffin on his astute head.

Need I detail any more the horrors of early rising on board the Royal Addlehead—how, begirt with snores and disturbed grumbles, I groped about, looking for water and finding none? Shall I relate how, in the struggling, curdled daylight, I found myself washing my face with sour wine, and rinsing my mouth with cognac—how, at last, tired and seedy, I crept up the brass-bound stairs to be greeted with a rolling swill from a German sailor's wash-bucket—and how, finally, my heroic and self-denying exertions were crowned by my having a fine view of what a Turkish soldier said was the shore of the Bosphorus?

Only last night, waltzing on the wharf at Galatz to the music of an Austrian bird-organ, and now—the wobegone crew we were, on this Stygian shore!—clinging to ropes, sitting on green seats, watching stamped and

labelled luggage marked "Stamboul" swung up from the hold out almost on the bowsprit; there we are, in half an hour from my Lazarus-like emerging, all eager for the Golden City, now hidden by the fog which the enchanters had raised about it. The German actress from Bonn, and her pretty little arch-daughter, Thekla, were in despair, and the prettiest little scornful shrugs indicated that hopeless state. The rustic baker was stolid and patient; the vivacious Smyrna clerk, of Macedonian blood, but Servian born, was melancholy, for he said the Turks were a stupid, silent people, and did not like conversation and the bel esprit; young Snaffle, the Leicestershire squire, thought regretfully of "what a day it was for the partridges, and wondered how he could have been such a d-dash'd fool as to leave England;" the stout old gentleman, Snaffle, senior, who played the flute all over the Black Sea when there was no wind, thought it delightful, and made absurd geographical inquiries of old Turks who did not understand him as to where the "Sea of Memory" (Marmora) was, and was always mistaking the Galata side of the Golden Horn for the Stamboul side, and Tophana for the Seraglio Point.

The chemistry of a fog is as well known as its ingredients, even to the London pinch of carbonated hydrogen, that makes your eyes smart and your tongue behave badly; but I know perfectly well (and it is no use keeping it from me) that the fog on that special August morning, glooming white over the domes, and minarets, and prisons, and baths, and mosques, and bazaars of Stamboul, was a diabolical fog of *his* (you know whom I mean) special brewing—and that what was going on everywhere in those matted seraglios, and those steamy bath-rooms, and those little dirty coffee-shops, and that large barrack stable, was

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for one white and royal neck. Yes, some of those sinewy men in the striped silk shirts, that kept quivering their oars, in their swallow-winged boats, all round our vessel, waiting for us, their prey, knew of it; so, perhaps, did those three dervishes, in the brown, flower-pot, felt caps, I met toiling up to Pera; so, perhaps, did that sentinel in the dirty blue coat and red fez whom we passed at the half-way guard-house; so, perhaps, that very hammal (porter), with the knot on his back, and the ragged wisp of a green turban, whom I engaged to carry my red diamonded portmanteau and my red diamonded hat-box up the dreadful hill that leads to Misseri's hotel at Pera—the Royal Monopoly Hotel.

But to go back to the ship. It was just as I had tied together my plaid and stick, feed the steward, shaken hands with the Bohemian baker, exchanged parting sentences with the Smyrna clerk, and generally wished good-by to the captain and crew, that the fog began to curdle closer and closer, to steam and boil thinner and thinner, to filter and clarify, till slowly, slowly the red arrows of the sultan sun pierced

it through and through, like an enchanted changing monster, Hell-born that it was, driving through its cloudy brain and heart keen, sharp, red golden darts, tipped with fire; so that releasing reluctantly the great dying city of the sick man for whom the bowstring was twisting, from its acres of cloudy claws, it rolled and folded away till it melted, and vanished over the golden ridge of distant Olympus. Then, as once on the mountain near Jerusalem, rose before our eyes a new city and a new earth, dome after dome, minaret after minaret, cypress after cypress, fire-tower and mosque of the old city of Constantine, marshalled phalanxes of houses, river wall, and kiosk, and deserted palace; and over all, in that morning splendour, could I but have seen it, was a comet's fiery sword, hanging by a thread from Heaven. The harvest, truly, was ripe, and I could almost hear as I listened the reaper grinding his sickle.

But what time had I for these carrion-crow forebodings as I jolted down the ship's black-grated ladder, balanced myself for a moment in a denunciating position to still the jabbering uproar of thirteen conflicting Turkish boatmen, who all seized different parts of me at once, and dropped into a keen-pointed kyjik portmanteau, hat-box, plaid, stick, and all, my Panama hat firmly thrust on, and my mouth full of newly-learned Turkish, eager to leap out on the smallest provocation. I was as eager to land, as Cæsar at Dover, or William at Hastings; so on I dashed, first man, to reach the shore, leaving the two Snaffles, the baker, the Smyrna clerk, the little actress, and all of them, in various stages of despair. It was selfish, but early rising had soured me, and up I leaped when the boat's snout touched the foot of the wooden bridge that joins Stamboul to Galata—the Frank quarter—like an Irish sergeant leading a forlorn hope up the fiery gap at Badajoz. It was like walking up a wall.

I was thinking of Nouredin and the Fair Persian, of the Calendar Brothers, of Sinbad, now steward on board a Broussa steamer, and of Aladdin, that little Turk there, gnawing at a red pomegranate. I had no thoughts then, of conspiracy, nor knew that black gunpowder was padded soft and thick under the very ground I trod on—yes, under those very mountains of shivered laths, and bricks, and tiles, those dust-hills of wet and dry lime, which always lend variety to the traveller's first walk from the brink of the Golden Horn, which is called Galata, to the corpse-city of the Lower Empire, which is called Stamboul. How can I, too, even if I had thought of it, think quietly over the thunder-cloud pressing on the sleeping palace yonder, across the blue water, when every moment I was nearly swept from the face of the earth by donkeys laden with trailing dead planks, destructive as the scythe-winged chariots of Boadicea's army; when, after that, come swaddling panniers of Perote mules, brimming with peaches or running over with grapes; when, now a porter, toppling under a Broadwood piano, now, an Armenian, atlasing a

square coop of some forty barn-door fowls, met me full butt, and, regardless of all shilling "books of etiquette," drove me, whether I would or no, against wall or into shop, or down side alley, anywhere and everywhere, roaring out, with the brazen lungs (peculiar to porters, the Turkish caution, "Sakin!" take care), or the lingua franca one, Guardia, the final *a* being prolonged to a sort of howl, half warning, half threatening. Add to this a swarm of mounted Turkish pashas and their insolent attendants, Frank nursemaids, Greek priests, Roman Catholic padres, sisters of mercy in white-winged head-dresses, cosmopolite couriers, loathsome beggars, dwarfs, eunuchs, soldiers, and itinerant salesmen, and you have some small idea of what hindrances meditation meets with, in the perpendicular sweltering street leading from Galata below, to Pera above.

What were the real causes, my readers will want to know, of the great conspiracy brewing at the very time when I planted my foot in the ancient city, whose people are corpses, whose faith is fossilised, and whose Sultan is a mummy? I will try to explain them.

I am a slow-blooded man myself, but I have my boiling point. As certainly as at so many feet up a mountain the mosses change into perpetual snow, so certainly has every man this boiling point. Nations, too, have their boiling point, as kings and tyrants have learnt long before this, to their bitter cost. It was that very boiling point of impatient suffering that Turkey had just reached, and that was why that enchanted morning when I first set foot on the wooden bridge of Constantinople, so many thousand brown and busy hands were busily employed in the dark, in

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That was why in great barrack khans frosty-faced grim Circassians, and in matted convent rooms absorbed-looking dervishes, were twisting so busily that foggy morning when, hearty and cheerful, I shouldered my way to the house that is set on a hill; that was why the little sinewy bowstring was then twisting by a thousand hands in horse-bazaar, in cemetery, among turbaned tombstones, by defaced monuments of Janissaries, on shipboard under tarred awnings, in cafés, in dim shops, in gardens away by ruined aqueducts, among the very galley slaves themselves, as, with the malice of hell upon their hideous faces, they cluster round the post to which their great master, the Smyrniote murderer Katerji, is chained like a Prometheus, muttering and balancing their ponderous chains as future weapons in their devilish hands. The city that morning, could I but have seen below the surface, was like one great factory, where thousands of hands were employed in twisting a green bowstring. If you could have seen their quiet, stealthy faces, and the cold, fatalist smile that moved lip and brow, you would have thought it was some religious red cordon of honour they were weaving and plaiting for the descendant of the Prophet, instead of the death cord.

They had wrongs—deep wrongs—these Turkish people, and that simmering froth that foretold boiling over, did not arise in the great Turkish pot without a reason. There were two classes of malcontents: the European party, who could get no reforms introduced, owing to the Sultan's debauched apathy and sottish selfishness; the old Mussulman party, who were horrified and alarmed at their miserable Sardanapalus becoming the tool and puppet of insolent, foreign, infidel, stiff-legged, stiff-backed old ambassadors, and who attributed all to Allah's anger at the vices and godless open wine-bibbing of the Imbecile who spent his time in building card houses, and throwing his country's gold into the foundation pits of new palaces. These two armies of conspirators, meeting at some cross-road of joint sympathy, seem to have been there recruited by a third party of neutrals, less abstract men, who had to complain bitterly of over-taxes wasted on royal extravagance, of wronged women, of wine hateful to the Prophet, of wicked and base-born favourites, of frontier lines neglected, of a navy decaying to a toy fleet, of cruelty, crime, and misrule, of pashas overpaid for putting provinces to the rack for money, of revenue wasted in collecting, and of a thousand other small evils springing up daily like poisonous seeding fungi on the dead trunk of a fallen oak.

To swell these three allied bands, poured in a great, bloodthirsty, fierce, irrestrainable, unreasoning, armed mob of soldiers, complaining of eight months' pay owing; and, at the back of these, conspicuous in their high, white-wool caps, came some thousands of exiled Circassians, driven from their country on the surrender of their great saint, hero, and chieftain Schamyl, and now starving in the streets of Stamboul for want of the miserable stipend promised, but never given them, by the fool Sultan, the guilty misruler of an angry and resentful nation. On the banners of all these united rebels was to have been blazoned the cry, "Give us a responsible government!" but I fear that the wild rabble at the back of these standard-bearers, of these venerable, snow-bearded priests and grave, religious men, might, in a moment of heat, revenge, and forgetfulness, have rashly used the green bowstring that had been so long a twisting. No doubt, as in all revolutions, there was, too, a blood party, who wished to convince their enemies by cutting their throats. So much the worse for the foreman of the state, who had received such good wages for such bad work. A bad king is a dishonest servant, and should be driven out as such, and will be whenever his people grow wise enough: for royalty is an expensive luxury, and all we men like our money's worth.

As for the massacre of the Christians, it was never dreamed of, and the rumour must have arisen from the mere discovery of many of the violent Mahommedan and fanatic party in the plot. The object of those men was the object for which our own fathers fought so well and so bravely at Naseby and at Culloden against John

and against Richard, against Charles and against James; so let us not now, snug in port, sit on the pier-head, sneering and laughing at the poor fishing-boat still battling and writhing under the storm?

But one feeling, on that day of the disclosure, filled the stores of Galata and the cafés of Pera, and that was, deep regret that so wise, just, and temperate a conspiracy had not been successful. The wisest men among the Turks had been heard to say so, within the very precincts of the Porte itself. Everybody had long felt that the country was rushing to ruin, and preferred the first throw out into the red ditch to the crush and smash against the stone wall or the turnpike-gate.

I believe that the day the news had come of the using the bowstring, not a hand would have shaken or a face turned pale in the shops or banking-houses of Galata and Pera. I am sure the sun would not have hid his face or the moon put a cloudy handkerchief to her eyes. Lonely as Pompey on the sea-shore, that poor, dead debauchee would have been thrown on gilded cushions, the courtier flies kept from him only, perhaps, by the loving hand of some poor wronged and forgotten exile of Circassia. But let him take care; there are bowstrings yet in Turkey, and hands to use them, if the galling chain be not soon broken and the pasha dogs whipped back to their Stamboul barrack kennels!

But let me not talk of the conspiracy as crushed and unsuccessful; it was rather repressed than crushed, its failure was almost a victory. There have been conspiracies so wide spread, so vast, so dangerous, so indicative of decay and national ruin, that kings have not dared to punish them. This was one of those—no head has yet fallen, no blood has yet been spilt; banishment to Greece, or beautiful free green Zante, is no great punishment; it is like the penalty you pay at forfeits, when you have to kiss a lady's hand, or eat a rose-leaf salad. Men thought they had found a rat-hole in the floor of the house built on the sand (which is the Turkish Empire), and when they lifted planks, lo! it widened to an old pit-mouth full of black and yawning destruction. The man who goes down into his Sicilian cellar for the Blue Seal, and finds it turned since yesterday into the crater of a volcano, could not have been more frightened than the imbecile Sultan. How pale the gilded fool turned when on the long roll of hateful names he read his own brother's first.

Quick as murderers' shovels over the gashed corpse, went the vizirs' spades to cover up the hateful thing, and conceal it from the light of day. The editor of the Pera paper was silenced; he dare tell nothing; no one knew anything; cautious lying reports were sent to foreign courts; even our great Times itself came out with miserable scantlings of the plot, its dangers pared away.

The Sultan's brother had been confronted with the conspirators and had come reasonably well out of the ordeal; yet, mud will stick;

and it is an unpleasant thing to think you live with a brother who has been even tacitly cognisant of a conspiracy. A man may not say "yes," but he may nod his head, and that generally means assent. Crime there could be none, for to slay the Sultan would have only been zeal for the Koran. Then, the thousands of soldiers clamouring for their right, were they to be mowed down like the old Janissaries, or paid, and so confessed to be the Sultan's pretorian masters? A small, strong man, regardless of a thousand yelling turbans, would have felled the growing hydra; the small, weak man patted it on the head, and threw it sops to stay its hundred mouths: willing to wound, the Sultan was afraid to strike. This Augustulus instantly threw the soldiers their eight months' pay, and began to grant the very reforms that this conspiracy was organised to obtain. Let a dog bite you once with impunity, and it takes no prophet to know what reception you will meet with from that dog the next time you pass the dangerous door. But fools learn nothing, and forget nothing, as Napoleon said of the wretched, worn-out Bourbons. It will yet be seen if this weak man will stop his selfish vice and reckless palace-building; probably he will, but only for a time. Palace-building is his one idea, his one amusement, his one taste, his special extravagance. What can the most blue-devilled, yawning potentate in the world, do without his palace-building? It is his one exertion, to watch the builders: his one excitement, to arrange matters with his European upholsterers: his one intellectual amusement, to be earwigged by the castle in Spain architect: his one financial bit of business, to look over his architect's bills: his one great change for the year, to move from the last but one river palace to the very last—the bran new one. Besides, pray pity the sorrows of the poor weak man, who, having lost his own religion and got no better, is obliged to fill up the vacancy with the inevitable substitute, *superstition*. The Sultan is superstitious, and is said to believe, as tenaciously as he can believe anything, that Allah will not let him die as long as he has a palace in a state of incompleteness; so on he goes building, and his bills grow faster than his buildings.

This superstition, like most others, I imagine is very old, it is just a fossil bit of Paganism, like our English witch creed, our amulets, and our charms. In Spain they seldom (for instance) finish a church, partly from want of funds, and partly from a belief that this incompleteness checks the devil's envy, and chokes off the evil eye. The dread of exciting the bad spirit's envy, is as old as the Ionian Greeks, vide the ring of Polycrates, and the story of Cressus and Solon, in Herodotus. In Greece, too, I have heard legends of a certain mad French Duchess, who kept building houses under the same belief, but who died at last, in spite of her recipe, her truthful doctor's assurances, Ninon de l'Enclos cosmetic, and everything.

So at least the Sultan has precedent for his folly—was there ever folly without prece-

dents?—and those who think him a courageous imbecile are mistaken, and accuse him falsely, for he is only a cowardly one, and will give his poor down-trodden people just whatever they force from him.

"No, thank you; 'bliged all the same. No, 'pon my word, thankee."

The fact is (between ourselves) that Sultan is in a position compared with which a naked man fallen into a pit full of live hedgehogs, or Professor Moler poking his spectacled head into what he thought was an empty beehive, but which, unfortunately for the acute St. John's wood Professor, turns out to be unusually full and busy, are as trifles not worthy a place in a business man's diary. I would rather light my chamber fire with a powder barrel, or let off bomb shells for fun at an evening party, than I would sit on that man's—that Eastern shadow's—throne. I think, of the two, I would rather have to lecture on Mr. Tupper's philosophy, or go the (second) first trip in the Great Eastern, though both these are as painful and dangerous things as any ventures I know of.

In the first place, because I should have to sit and be thumbscrewed and politely bullied by those stiff-legged European ambassadors, knowing resistance to be hopeless, and that delay will only lead to more dreadful audiences and boredom unending; secondly, because of that unpleasant bowstring which, somehow or other, cut it often as you may, will still go on twisting in some part of Stamboul; thirdly, because I should have to govern a stupid, rebellious people, who have just discovered the logical power of multitude, and that palace-building (delightful as it is) is not what kings were put on the throne for; also, because there are at present in Stamboul at least ten thousand armed and sullen Circassians, sore at defeat, rankling and vexed at their flight from the Russians, enraged at being staved off with promises, and refused even hospitality—which has ever been the golden and unchanging virtue of every Mahomedan, be he rich or poor. In those rude carts, that are now jolting them off to a new home in Anatolia, I have seen regiments of silver-banded matchlocks; at the waist of every one of those angry, dauntless men, there is at this moment (unless it has gone to be ground) a huge double-edged dagger, broad as the palm of your hand: a weapon as terrible as the Roman gladium, and very like it. Given (as logicians say) a sudden revolt, what would stop some thousands of these northern warriors, burning with defeat, from hewing a bloody way to that gilded palace of Sardanapalus—Lord Stratford's kind friend—and then and there chopping him as small as minced veal, to show him what a Sultan merits who promised the brave children of Schamyl fourpence a week and never paid them. But here I am moralising and politicising; so I will return and get back to that crowded street—crowded as the road to Noah's Ark, and with much such a motley set of animals—leading from Galata to Pera: from the Genoese tower, in fact, to my destination (inevitable, for I am an Englishman),

the hotel that is called Misseri's. I turn and face the blue Bosphorus that lies softly below, dividing the Turkish from the Christian quarter of Stamboul. Away there further, I know lie Prinkipo and its sister islands, and further stretches the blue breaker line of Asia Minor. Slowly my eye passes through all these delicious changes, and then, travelling into the higher sky, still craves more beauty and more magic. Can that be earth still, that glorified bar of golden cloud, through which a broken line of white gleams, like the angel that threads a dream?

"Why, Chilibi," says the porter, gnawing some chesnuts at the street corner, "that is Mount Olympus."

LEIGH HUNT. A REMONSTRANCE.

"THE sense of beauty and gentleness, of moral beauty and faithful gentleness, grew upon him as the clear evening closed in. When he went to visit his relative at Putney, he still carried with him his work, and the books he more immediately wanted. Although his bodily powers had been giving way, his most conspicuous qualities, his memory for books, and his affection remained; and when his hair was white, when his ample chest had grown slender, when the very proportion of his height had visibly lessened, his step was still ready, and his dark eyes brightened at every happy expression, and at every thought of kindness. His death was simply exhaustion: he broke off his work to lie down and repose. So gentle was the final approach, that he scarcely recognised it till the very last, and then it came without terrors. His physical suffering had not been severe; at the latest hour he said that his only uneasiness was failing breath. And that failing breath was used to express his sense of the inexhaustible kindness he had received from the family who had been so unexpectedly made his nurses,—to draw from one of his sons, by minute, eager, and searching questions, all that he could learn about the latest vicissitudes and growing hopes of Italy,—to ask the friends and children around him for news of those whom he loved,—and to send love and messages to the absent who loved him."

Thus, with a manly simplicity and filial affection, writes the eldest son of Leigh Hunt in recording his father's death. These are the closing words of a new edition of "The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt," published by Messrs. Smith and Elder, of Cornhill, revised by that son, and enriched with an introductory chapter of remarkable beauty and tenderness. The son's first presentation of his father to the reader, "rather tall, straight as an arrow, looking slenderer than he really was; his hair black and shining, and slightly inclined to wave; his head high, his forehead straight and white, his eyes black and sparkling, his general complexion dark; in his whole carriage and manner an extraordinary degree of life," completes the picture. It is the picture of the flourishing and

fading away of man that is born of a woman and hath but a short time to live.

In his presentation of his father's moral nature and intellectual qualities, Mr. Hunt is no less faithful and no less touching. Those who knew Leigh Hunt, will see the bright face and hear the musical voice again, when he is recalled to them in this passage: "Even at seasons of the greatest depression in his fortunes, he always attracted many visitors, but still not so much for any repute that attended him as for his personal qualities. Few men were more attractive, in society," whether in a large company or over the fireside. His manners were peculiarly animated; his conversation, varied, ranging over a great field of subjects, was moved and called forth by the response of his companion, be that companion philosopher or student, sage or boy, man or woman; and he was equally ready for the most lively topics or for the gravest reflections—his expression easily adapting itself to the tone of his companion's mind. With much freedom of manners, he combined a spontaneous courtesy that never failed, and a considerateness derived from a ceaseless kindness of heart that invariably fascinated even strangers." Or in this: "His animation, his sympathy with what was gay and pleasurable; his avowed doctrine of cultivating cheerfulness, were manifest on the surface, and could be appreciated by those who knew him in society, most probably even exaggerated as salient traits, on which he himself insisted *with a sort of gay and ostentatious wilfulness.*"

The last words describe one of the most captivating peculiarities of a most original and engaging man, better than any other words could. The reader is besought to observe them, for a reason that shall presently be given. Lastly: "The anxiety to recognise the right of others, the tendency to 'refine,' which was noted by an early school companion, and the propensity to elaborate every thought, made him, along with the direct argument by which he sustained his own conviction, recognise and almost admit all that might be said on the opposite side." For these reasons, and for others suggested with equal felicity, and with equal fidelity, the son writes of the father, "It is most desirable that his qualities should be known as they were; for such deficiencies as he had are the honest explanation of his mistakes; while, as the reader may see from his writing and his conduct, they are not, as the faults of which he was accused would be, incompatible with the noblest faculties both of head and heart. To know Leigh Hunt as he was, was to hold him in reverence and love."

These quotations are made here, with a special object. It is not, that the personal testimony of one who knew Leigh Hunt well, may be borne to their truthfulness. It is not, that it may be recorded in these pages, as in his son's introductory chapter, that his life was of the most amiable and domestic kind, that his wants were few, that his way of life was frugal, that

he was a man of small expenses, no ostentations, a diligent labourer, and a secluded man of letters. It is not, that the inconsiderate and forgetful may be reminded of his wrongs and sufferings in the days of the Regency, and of the national disgrace of his imprisonment. It is not, that their forbearance may be entreated for his grave, in right of his graceful fancy or his political labours and endurances, though

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well.

It is, that a duty may be done in the most direct way possible. An act of plain, clear duty.

Four or five years ago, the writer of these lines was much pained by accidentally encountering a printed statement, "that Mr. Leigh Hunt was the original of Harold Skimpole in Bleak House." The writer of these lines, is the author of that book. The statement came from America. It is no disrespect to that country, in which the writer has, perhaps, as many friends and as true an interest as any man that lives, good-humouredly to state the fact, that he has, now and then, been the subject of paragraphs in Transatlantic newspapers, more surprisingly destitute of all foundation in truth than the wildest delusions of the wildest lunatics. For reasons born of this experience, he let the thing go by.

But, since Mr. Leigh Hunt's death, the statement has been revived in England. The delicacy and generosity evinced in its revival, are for the rather late consideration of its revivers. The fact, is this:

Exactly those graces and charms of manner which are remembered in the words we have quoted, were remembered by the author of the work of fiction in question, when he drew the character in question. Above all other things, that "sort of gay and ostentatious wilfulness" in the humouring of a subject, which had many a time delighted him, and impressed him as being unspeakably whimsical and attractive, was the airy quality he wanted for the man he invented. Partly for this reason, and partly (he has since often grieved to think) for the pleasure it afforded him to find that delightful manner reproducing itself under his hand, he yielded to the temptation of too often making the character *speak* like his old friend. He no more thought, God forgive him! that the admired original would ever be charged with the imaginary vices of the fictitious creature, than he has himself ever thought of charging the blood of Desdemona and Othello, on the innocent Academy model who sat for Iago's leg in the picture. Even as to the mere occasional manner, he meant to be so cautious and conscientious, that he privately referred the proof sheets of the first number of that book to two intimate literary friends of Leigh Hunt (both still living), and altered the whole of that part of the text on their discovering too strong a resemblance to his "way."

He cannot see the son lay this wreath

on the father's tomb, and leave him to the possibility of ever thinking that the present words might have righted the father's memory and were left unwritten. He cannot know that his own son may have to explain his father when folly or malice can wound his heart no more, and leave this task undone.

TWO DEAD MEN'S STORIES.

LET us call the first dead man John Cartridge, of whom, from a penny class-book, the other day picked up on a Holborn stall, the following particulars are learned: Served in the Peninsula, and after the battle of Toulouse, in 1814, landed, under welcoming salute, in the bright Cove of Cork, with his regiment, the 2nd —, in August in that year. As a sketch of Irish manners at this period, the little forgotten class-book, from which we extract, in a condensed form, Cartridge's military experiences—valuable chiefly as an honest man's uncoloured relations—is not without interest.

From Cork the regiment marched to Fermoy, and Cartridge, lagging behind his companions, came suddenly, at a turn of the road, on a countryman driving a cart with a coffin in it. No neighbour was with them, no mourner followed the ghastly funeral but one old woman, who, with the grey hair about her face, clung to the vehicle while she shrieked out the keening dirge with a wild cry that the wind bore to an incredible distance.

It was an Irish lad who had turned king's evidence, and brought two of his own relations to the gallows by becoming witness against them on a charge of taking arms from the house of a gentleman in which they had all three been engaged. The wretch had never been happy nor had thriven after this cowardly treachery, and died of fever the day before Cartridge met his body. No neighbour would attend the wake; the traitor died accursed; the broken-hearted father drove his son's body to its nameless grave; the broken-hearted mother shrieked out the burial song, the only voice raised to lament him.

At the villages as they went along, Cartridge and his fellows found the rebellious peasants unwilling to give them billet. At one place, they were shown into a mud cabin without a chimney, and the woman drove out the pig from its lair by the fireside to make a bed for the "sogers." "Come away, honeys, you're welcome; it is yeess I was waiting for," the virago said, ironically; and when, snatching up her special stick, she drove the pig from its straw, it broke out like a wild-boar, and upset every infantry man it met; the woman's cry as the men moved off disgusted, was, "Och, is that the way you are going to leave me, and me a poor widdy?"

That night, in the whisky-shop where Cartridge lodged, the landlord told them that Judy O'Brien (the woman) was no friend to the soldiers, for she had lost two brave boys in the rebellion. "There had been a time when Judy

had been a great champion for her faction, and at one fair which seemed likely to end without a fight, Judy took off her jock, and holding it by one sleeve, trailed it after her, crying out that the blood of the Murphys was turned to butter-milk, and shouting, "Come, you chicken-hearted rogues, let me see the thief's breed of a Murphy that will dare to put his foot on my jock." As she brandished her stick the people laughed, and some one threw a dead rat in her face. This fired her blood; she instantly knocked the nearest Murphy down, and a fight ensued that beat anything that was ever seen, and Judy was there to the last.

At Waterford, where Cartridge was next quartered, he found the Orangemen raving still about '98, when the Papists burnt Scullabogue and piked the Protestants on the wooden bridge. "Better up to the knees in blood," said the Orangemen, "than let the roaring lion of Popery loose."

Cartridge and his comrades were all this time worried by being sent in perpetual detachments to disturbed villages, to protect constables, and to act as body-guards to bailiffs. The frightened authorities were always bringing to the barracks cock-and-bull stories of great meetings of Shanavests in the fields, and of intended massacres, all exaggerated by party hatred and terror. If a cabin was set on fire, they swore a village was burnt; if one man was wounded, he changed into a dozen dead Protestants. As for the magistrates, they were either timid and time-serving, or irritating alarmists, who persecuted and hunted about the people till they were goaded into resistance. Some barbarous deeds were committed by the Shanavests and the Caravats, but chiefly against oppressors and unjust landlords. They were divided, however, into parties, who sometimes met and fought during the great hurling matches, and the spies among them were innumerable. One day a blacksmith, who had been beaten by some Shanavests for daring to ask for money earned in repairing some rebel muskets, went at once to the magistrate, gave in a list of all the men who had arms, and the notice requiring their surrender was stuck up at the cross-roads. The notice brought in only a few, the rest, which had been taken by force at night from Royalists, were hid; but Barny, the smith, took the soldiers to the drain where forty stand of blunderbusses were hid. From this time, however, Barny, the smith, had to live at the barrack, and eventually, for fear of the Croppies' guns, to voluntarily transport himself from his ungrateful country. Revenge was generally the aim of the Shanavests, but most of the gangs had professional robbers and housebreakers associated with the patriots and murderers.

Cartridge was present at the trial of a ring-leader, a rough peasant, who had united both virtues—that of burglary with that of murder. He stood at the bar, bold, audacious, and unflinching. There was circumstantial evidence of his guilt, but the blood had long since been washed off his hands, and unless some one more

link were found the man must be released. The grey wigs moved about vexed and uneasy. The judge peered through his spectacles, loth to lose his prey. The constables scratched their heads—the prisoner flashed out triumph and defiance from under his scowling brows. He was all but free—the last chain was dropping from his limbs.

The public prosecutor, twirling his gown tighter round him, got up with angry, bloodshot eyes, and said, throwing down his papers, "My Lord, I am compelled to own that the case against the prisoner, Dennis Sullivan, has been but imperfectly made out. I will, therefore, not trouble your Lord—"

A stir in court, a bustle at the door, disturbed the speech.

The judge looked round, angry at the disturbance.

"Make way for the witness," shouted the crier.

A woman who had been repeatedly called for, without avail, ascended the steps, and sat in the witnesses' chair.

Every one looked surprised but the prisoner; his face was stone, and he reeled from the bar with a convulsive groan, saying, "I am sold." He stood to listen then with livid lips, tightly compressed, hands clenched, and a cold dew rising on his forehead.

The woman filled up every nook of evidence. She proved the blood shed, and the presence and blows of the prisoner. As she left the table, the man caught her eye, and gave a withering look, pregnant with deadly revenge, "fruitful of murder;" and as the judge put on the black cap and pronounced sentence, he collected all his energy, and poured on her a curse with the violence of a maddened demon. He was sentenced to death, and but few days of respite were given him.

The morning of his execution, his friends, who had tried in vain to drown their sorrow in whisky, came "to see him off." The scene that took place was horrible, yet ludicrous. Presently the sheriff's signal came, and the procession moved on to the drop in front of the gaol, where Cartridge and the soldiers were drawn up. Here the murderer parted with his drunken friends.

"Here, Murty," said he to an old fellow Croppy, "take these brogues"—he shuffled off his shoes—"take them, honey; no hangman rascal shall get an O'Sullivan's shoes."

The friends now collected, frenzied with drink and sorrow, came out to the plot of grass between the soldiers and the drop.

When the Croppy came out, he approached the door leading to the drop, and pushed forward to the edge of the platform to address the people. The hangman, however, forced him back, and put the rope round his neck. He then stepped forward boldly, and said, in a loud, brave voice:

"This is no crime for which I suffer. God bless dear Ireland!"

A murmur of assent arose from the crowd, and Murtagh roared out:

"Ah, poor Andy! and the shoes of him off too!" sinking down on the grass as he spoke in the violence of his passion; but suddenly recovering himself, he rose up and waved his hand to the wretch, now standing like a statue on the drop:

"Die hardy, Andy! Andy, jewil, die like a man!"

The people fell on their knees and prayed for the soul of their red-handed martyr about so soon to part, and the next moment Andy flung the handkerchief from his hand fiercely, and was thrown into the murderer's world that awaited him.

The receipt of six months arrears of Peninsular pay quite upset Cartridge's regiment. The soldiers were as mad and reckless as sailors just paid off after a long war. Jaunting-cars and gigs were hired, and when adorned with ribbons and handkerchiefs, were driven off in search of adventures into the country, the women shouting, the children capering, the dogs barking, and the pigs running, as if the town were being sacked. The sociables and cars flew down every street, scarlet with soldiers clinging outside them, to the imminent danger of their necks. One lag-gard, who could not get a seat even on a turf-cart, jumped into a large buttermilk-churn, such as the countrywomen bring into the towns lashed to their cars, and in this huge wooden case, that hid him up to the neck, he was driven off to the country amid general enthusiasm.

Much to the surprise of the waiter, Cartridge and a friend went off to drink a bottle of wine together at the principal hotel in the town. They were scarcely seated before two officers of Cartridge's friend's regiment entered, and Cartridge asked them to drink.

"Of course I will," said one of the officers, who was much liked by the men; "shall I forget that hot march in Spain, when we were all dying of thirst and you gave me the last sup in your canteen?"

Cartridge whispered his friend, and asked him why he did not invite the other officer to drink.

"Devil a sup," said the friend, quite loud; upon which the officer coloured with rage, and left the room.

"Who is he?" asked Cartridge.

His comrade told him the story. "It was Captain Johnson, who in Spain had caused the death of poor Hobson, a boy in the regiment. Hobson was a sickly boy, who, finding himself, from want of stamina, unable to keep up in the long marches, reported himself as sick to the doctor. The doctor, finding no symptoms of disease in him, struck him off the sick-roll, and roughly sent him back to the line of march. The next day Hobson fell by the roadside and was left behind. Captain Johnson, riding up and finding a lad whom he considered a sham lag-gard, swore he would have him flogged by the provost if he did not march. Next day he again reported himself sick, was again examined by the same doctor, and again sent on to march with his company as a schemer. As before, he fell, and was given in charge to the rear-guard by the

same captain. Poor lad! The captain brutally ordered two men to drag on the rascal, and another to follow and prick him with a bayonet whenever he dared to stop. All this time he never complained, and the men, finding him too weak for the march, left him behind. The poor boy had been glad at any risk to prove his real weakness. Now he dreaded the captain, and all the world seemed against him. He was left to starve, or be eaten by the wolves. Heart-broken and tired of the cruel world, he crawled out of the ditch into a melon-field, then loaded his musket, and, taking off the stocking from his bleeding foot, put his toe on the trigger of his gun and blew out his brains.

There seems to have been considerable jealousy existing between Cartridge's regiment and the Highland Watch, or gallant Frills-second, stationed also at Fermoy. The Highland regiment were specially vain of the long frills they wore attached to their shirts—frills that were ostentatiously drawn out down to the second buttons of their jackets. Cartridge abuses the frill wearers right and left, says they were at first only Scotch policemen, that they were slouchlan in appearance, and that their courage arose from desperation when they got, as in Egypt, into scrapes by their own foolish rashness. One especial cause of quarrel was, that a Highlander of the Watch, having been asked why Cartridge's regiment did not also wear frills, replied, "Oh, she'll lose her frill for running away." This slander was never forgiven till the two regiments separated.

At Dublin, where Cartridge's regiment next went, a painful case of desertion happened. A band-master had been borrowed from a militia regiment to teach the younger lads. The man proved a good musician, but of a sour, overbearing temper, and with no more power of teaching than the clarionet he played on. He kept the regiment in a perpetual broil, and not a day passed without punishments or complaints. This petty tyrant became especially jealous of a boy named Rogers, who threatened to surpass him in tone and expression. This roused his dislike, and he heaped on the poor lad every species of annoyance, even debarring him from the use of music and of his instrument.

Rogers, a boy of precocious talent, proud heart, and great susceptibility, could not brook this persecution, and finding no superior officer who would protect him, deserted, and took ship for Glasgow, where his parents resided. His mother, horrified at the disgrace, instantly brought him back to Dublin, and gave him up to the commanding officer. He was at once pardoned, being but a boy, and recommenced his duty. His oppressor persecuted him now more than before, and at morning drill loaded him with taunts and insults. Provoked beyond bearing, after much patient silence, the boy replied in terms that approached mutiny. He was instantly reported, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be flogged. At the end of twenty-five lashes the boy fainted and was taken down. But he never recovered the

sense of this disgrace, and got his friends to petition at head-quarters for his discharge. His mother herself came to London, and petitioned the Duke of York, but the regiment opposed the discharge, and his suit was refused at head-quarters. Rogers, driven to despair, deserted, and was heard of no more.

The mother of this unfortunate lad was a brave woman, a sergeant's wife, who distinguished herself by her courage when the French were besieging Matagorda, near Cadiz, in 1810. Her husband was one of the detachment of the 94th Regiment that occupied the fort when the French were bombarding it with thirty pieces of cannon. The shots fell in a ceaseless storm of fire upon a place not more than a hundred yards square. The bomb-proofs being too small to hold all the garrison, some of the soldiers had huts formed on the battery. Amongst these was the heroine. When the French opened fire, she was awoke by a twenty-four pound shot striking the fascine, but, nothing daunted, she got up, and, removing her child (four years old), she went to the bomb-proof to help the surgeon dress the wounded men, and to aid him she tore up all her own and husband's linen. Suddenly, the surgeon wanted water to wash the bleeding thigh of a wounded artilleryman; a drum-boy was told to go and draw some from a well in the centre of the battery court-yard. He did not seem very willing, and kept lingering at the door with the bucket in his hand. "Why don't you go, boy, for the water?" shouted the surgeon. "The poor thing's frightened," said the sergeant's wife, "and no wonder at it. Give it me, and I'll go myself!"

Off went the brave woman with the bucket through a rain of iron, but just as she was lowering the bucket, whiz went a shot and cut the rope in two; but the heroine, determined to carry out her object, called a sailor from the guns, and got him to help her recover it. She then filled it, and took it safely down to the bomb-proof to the impatient surgeon.

Nor did the brave woman rest here: she carried sand-bags to repair the battery, handed up ammunition, and supplied the men at the guns at intervals with wine and water, and when the other two women, who had been grovelling down in the bomb-proof in hysterics from the first opening of the fire, were taken away, she refused to go.

Next morning, the powder and shot being exhausted, our firing ceased, and the French, seeing the fort was half broken up, sent down a strong force to finish the job at one blow. The heroine was at her post when the English mustered to receive their enemies. Three guns, all that amid the ruins could be brought to bear on the advancing mass, were crammed with loose powder, grape, and ball-cartridge, for a farewell shot. When they came within three hundred yards of the fort, this was given them, and half the column fell like one man. The rest took to flight, and instantly stormed out fresh discharges from the batteries. Fresh ammunition arriving, the English returned the salute,

but the place being now untenable, the rest of the garrison was removed safely in boats.

Three times the sergeant's wife traversed the fire-swept battery to remove effects of her husband's. The last time, she went for her child, who had been left safe in the bomb-proof; she returned, bending over it to shield it, at hazard of her own life, from the shot and shell flying round her thick as gnats over a summer pool. She escaped safely, and followed her husband to Glasgow after his discharge. Many officers interested themselves in her, and made a representation to the commander-in-chief, who warmly pleaded her claims for a pension to the secretary of war. But officials look upon such claims as vexatious interruptions of official intrigue and routine. His cold reply was, "We have no funds at our disposal for this purpose."

In 1826 she was living, advanced in years, her old husband and herself enjoying the grateful nation's bounty of one and tenpence a day.

The courage of this brave soldier's wife Cartridge compares with one only other real heroine he ever met—a mistress of an English captain of a light company, who followed her lover all through the campaign, sharing all his dangers and privations. At the battle of Vittoria she was left with the baggage; but, hearing from the disabled men who kept limping in, that her lover was wounded, she instantly mounted her horse, and rode down into the battle to search for him. She found him just as he breathed his last, and stopped, weeping by the body, till his company had dug a grave with their bayonets, and buried him out of her sight.

She was now left friendless and helpless; she was forsaken and forlorn; her money soon went, then her watch, then her horse—last of all, her lover's miniature. The last thing Cartridge saw of her was as a wretched camp-follower, struggling through the mud in the rear of the line of march, with her shoes torn from her feet. Soon afterwards she disappeared, and what became of her will never be known.

Here the class-book, leaving the author just starting to join the *dépôt* of his regiment in Canada, breaks off, and Cartridge passes from us for ever away into darkness.

Some details, picked up by chance, yield the following interesting narrative of an Old Soldier's life. There is a short, quick, and sudden flavour of Gunpowder in this second dead man's story.

Firelock (so to call him) was in a Highland regiment, and was with Abercrombie, and that illustrious but insolvent hero the Duke of York (the columnar Duke of York), in the miserable expedition in Holland. Firelock's regiment had to drive out the enemy from a range of sand-hills that ran along the Dutch coast, facing the German ocean. Two or three companies marched abreast along the beach, firing four pieces of cannon at the retreating enemy.

In the advance Firelock passed a dying man who had been struck by a cannon-ball upon the knee-joint, which had been carried away, the leg only hanging to the thigh by two shreds of

tendon. A little further the young soldier saw a man lying dead, with a ghastly expression on his face which he never forgot; he had been shot exactly through the centre of the thigh, and had died with one grasp.

The sand-hills were various in height and slope. Some were of loose sand, conical and steep; others ran in winding, wavy ridges. It was difficult to walk on when the upper crust was broken; but here and there were chasms and hollow flats.

There was hard fighting in broken knots among these hills, our men coming often unexpectedly on masses of the enemy, who defended the hills as if they had been redoubts. In one instance, a party of Firelock's regiment rushing down from a sand ridge on the enemy, slipped, and fell headlong among them. The bottom of the pit being narrow, and there being no side footing, the bayonet could not be used, so the men fought with their butt-ends, and even with their fists. The English were at last driven back with loss, the men being worn out by fatigue and want of water. They collected water by putting empty ammunition-boxes in the holes in the sand, where, after the trampling of the fighting, rain had collected. Out of Firelock's regiment, six hundred strong, two hundred and eighty-eight were wounded, in a short struggle of three-quarters of an hour. Of the dead, very few could be recognised, and those chiefly by scars of old wounds, birth marks, or accidents of dress. One man belonging to Firelock's company was found dead, though without a wound; it was supposed from fatigue and want of water.

Two foes who were found dead, locked in each other's arms, excited great attention. They were a Frenchman and a Highlander. They had charged at each other, and the Frenchman parrying the Highlander's thrust had run him through the body; the Highlander feeling himself gone, and stung with revenge, had thrown his musket into his left hand, and seized his enemy's throat with an unrelenting death-grasp. The Frenchman then had transferred his musket to his left hand, and seized the Highlander's wrist to release his throat, but, unable, had staggered and fallen on his back, the Highlander still on him. A dreadful struggle had taken place on the ground, ending in the Frenchman dying strangled, and the Highlander of the bayonet wound in the stomach. Each corpse still held his musket in his left hand, and, when the Highlander was lifted, his firm stiffened grasp raised the Frenchman from the ground. It was with difficulty the dead men could be separated.

Firelock, after this miserable failure, went to Egypt, and was at the great landing in Aboukir Bay. Our fifteen thousand men landed in the midst of a heavy fire from the French, who were posted on the sand-hills. The boats were all more or less perforated with grape-shot and musket-bullets, but no great damage was done. Some few boats were swamped, but the men were instantly picked up by the smaller boats

that followed for that express purpose. As Firelock landed, he found dead Frenchmen lying within wash of the water. In a sand hollow, where the 42nd had repulsed a charge of French cavalry just after landing, the foot soldiers were lying about among the dead horses. The artillery, landing as quickly as the infantry, had astonished the French, and helped to gain the victory.

That night, as Firelock and his comrades, after digging for water, lay wrapped in their blankets on the sand, many of them discovered that they were afflicted with what doctors call "night blindness." By day they saw as well as ever.

Firelock's march soon became laborious and painful. The French cavalry harassed the men, who were impeded in the deep sand through which the cheery seamen dragged the guns. At night each company dug a well; the top soil below the sand was the black deposit from the river. Deeper still lay the oozy clay that supplied the water.

About this time Firelock's regiment was ordered for picket. But Firelock and twenty more, who were night-blind, were placed in bunches in the rear. When it was necessary to move, a soldier was sent to guide them, holding each other in a string. "If the enemy had made a dash at us, then," thought the shrewd Firelock, "we could neither have fought nor escaped."

Between Aboukir castle and Alexandria, Firelock's regiment was sent with the 90th to form the advanced guard. They had no time to dig water, but got a sup of rum, and left their knapsacks with a guard. They soon joined with the enemy, and a regular fight commenced near Lake Mandy. The cavalry formed line just as the 90th did, and did it quicker too, and charged. The 90th left them alone till they were within sword reach; they then opened, and the fire ran from right to left with dreadful effect. The cavalry instantly fell back, and many horses ran away with empty and bloody saddles. Now came Firelock's turn, for the enemy were moving round with guns and dromedaries, hoping to cut off the five hundred English by outflanking and surrounding them. Firelock, like a brave, religious man, confessed his sins in the words of the 51st Psalm, and prepared for fighting.

At three hundred yards' distance only, the enemy drove up two field-pieces, and opened fire on Firelock and Co. One of the first balls fired came, as our friend thought, straight at him; it came skipping playfully along the sand straight at Firelock, and meaning mischief. Luckily for him, it grazed a small hillock of rubbish a few yards in front, and then felled the second file on his right. It struck the centre of the left leg of the front rank man, passing clean through it, and it tore away part of the rear rank man's left calf, and drove a quantity of

small stones from the rubbish into the faces of the soldiers and the lacerated limbs of the wounded. Both the struck men died soon after. "Perhaps but for the rubbish-heap the devil's toy had struck me," thought Firelock, and thanked God piously, as one of Cromwell's Ironsides might have done.

The men were all eager to fire, as the French were steadily advancing. The commanding officer, seeing rising ground between his men and the enemy, ordered them to stop till they could see the Frenchmen's feet. This fire soon silenced the artillery in front, till some marines and Dillon's regiment could advance and drive back the enemy. Already the officer of Firelock's company was wounded, as well as the commanding officer.

After firing twelve rounds, Firelock, in the act of loading, was struck by a musket-ball in the left side. It was close to the ribs and near the pit of the stomach, and the force of the stroke whirled him round on his heels. He was stunned, too, and feeling great pain, stepped to the rear, holding the place with his hands. He then looked and found the skin unbroken, and as he shook himself, the ball fell from his clothes at his feet. That night at bivouac, Firelock had time to look, and discovered that the ball had passed through his coat, cut his waistcoat between the second and third lower buttons; its further progress had been stopped by a small volume of Blair's Grave, which Firelock had in his side-pocket. The corner binding was cut, and the leaves all through bruised. The force with which the ball struck this accidental breastplate had wheeled Firelock round. He reflected that if he had been standing square front, or one inch nearer the right side, it would have been fatal. Many of his comrades who had their clothes cut and received contusions, attributed it to the French not using the ramrod in loading, which enabled them of course to fire with great rapidity, but left the charge loose and made the bullet go wavering and weak, so that the bullet only bruised where it should have pierced. This accounted for the tremendous sustained fire of the French, and also for its not being so destructive as was feared. As it was, in this battle of Alexandria, Firelock's regiment lost one hundred and twenty-five men, killed and wounded.

From this point, Firelock's day-book branches off into less interesting hospital incidents; and so we leave him, in his old age, retired to a cottage near Glasgow, long since vacated for a narrower home.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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